

THE PERFIDY  
OF  
CAPTAIN SLYBOOTS

AND OTHER TALES

BY

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"THE SEVEN SONS OF MAMMON," "THE BADDINGTON PERRAGE,"

"THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN DANGEROUS,"

ETC. ETC.

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## The Perfidy of Captain Slyboots.

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CAPTAIN SLYBOOTS, quotha ! Macheath was a captain, and so was Kidd the pirate. Jerry Abershaw (so deservedly hanged for stealing a bowl of mock-turtle soup) was also, as I am informed, given to the assumption of the title of captain. I'd captain them ! I am not a revengeful man. I love my neighbour as myself, and can forgive the cabman who overcharges me—after I have had him up before the magistrate, of course, and have seen him well punished for his soul's health. But I confess that I should like to see Captain Slyboots boiled ; that I should like to see him grilled ; that I should like to run red-hot forks—three-pronged—into those confounded blue eyes of his, and to introduce the sharp-pointed blades of penknives between his flesh and his finger-nails. He has destroyed my happiness. He has made a Sahara desert of Arabella Lodge, and reared a hideous Upas tree in the middle of the Brussels carpet in the back drawing-room. Yes ; the back drawing-room, for there—but be calm, my raging soul ; let me relate the story of my wrongs for the benefit of husbands in general, and gunpowder agents in particular. Let me gibbet this monster, and nail him like a vampire bat of a

light dragoon as he is against the door of the temple of Hymen. Give me a pen of adamant and a pint bottle of gall, and I will commit to paper the particulars of the atrocious—the fiendish, perfidy of Captain Slyboots.

I spoke of gunpowder agents. I'm one of them. I have an office in Broad-street-buildings, in the City of London, where I carry on the chief agency of the Bangford Powder Mills. You need not be afraid to come and see me. We don't keep much on the premises, and I never smoke before lunch. Good years, bad years, my commission, salary and perquisites, bring me in eight hundred a-year. I keep a dog-cart; my wife has a brougham, whenever she chooses to ask her "hubby"—or rather the wretched outcast who was once known to her by that endearing diminutive—for it; I live at Arabella Lodge, Brompton, and my name is Harcourt Symes. I have done with the vanities of the world now; so I don't mind telling you that I was christened Thomas, and that my papa used to spell *his* surname thus—Sims.

My Arabella—I don't mean my house, but my wife—was the beauty of Herne Bay; I married her in 'fifty-three, I married her for her loving heart, her varied accomplishments, and her long black ringlets. She had a little property, which I valued little indeed in comparison with her own sweet self, and which I have invested very advantageously in the Bank of Deposit in Pall Mall East. We have two children now—poor helpless inno-

cents!—Grenville Harcourt, aged three, I intend shall become a civil engineer; Arabella-Louisa, aged two, is destined for the church. The dear little creature is so staid and solemn, that my wife declares that when she grows up some bishop will be sure to fall in love with her and marry her.

Up to the month of November last year, Arabella Lodge was a model, on a small scale, of the garden of Eden. I don't think any children in Brompton ever cried so seldom as did ours. My Arabella was a capital manager, and the housekeeping bills were very moderate. Our cook was a treasure, and our two housemaids pearls; and as for James the foot-boy, I never knew such a clever boy as that boy. In gardening, grooming, knife-cleaning, errand-running, door-answering, and bringing home books from the circulating library, he was an Admirable Crichton. He had but one failing—a leaning towards singing nigger melodies, accompanied on the bones, in the back garden late at night; but a timely admonition, and a mild application of the back of a clothes-brush to the head, cured him of that ungenteel propensity. I don't think, six months ago, there was a happier man in Brompton—in London—in England—than Harcourt Symes. Slippers always ready when I came home; children always shiny-faced and well-dressed, with pink bows on their plump little shoulders as big as kites; cat—I hate cats—always snugly locked up in the coal-cellar; my Arabella smiling; my dog Buffo turning over head and heels with delight in the gravel-path;



the leaves of the new books all cut, the dinner ready, and the wine decanted. I entrusted her with everything, even with my Carbonnel's port. We were visited by, we received, the best families in the neighbourhood and outlying suburbs: the Almond Tumblers, of Thurlow Square (rich conveyancing family), the Pouter Pigeons of the Gloucester Road, the Cotchins of Brompton Square, the Chiners of Chiswick Mall. We had people from Kensington Palace—from the Royal Palace at Kensington—yes, sir—beneath our humble roof. Old Lady Fang, widow of George the Third's dentist and cupper, and enjoying the hospitality of a grateful country in that dignified retreat, took up my Arabella. She invited the very best society to our house. The Honourable Miss Julia Medea Buffleton (*she* lives at Hampton Court Palace, yes, sir, and is first cousin to *the* Lord Buffleton) used to come and read her three-volume novels of fashionable life to my wife, before she sent them to the crack West-end publishers, who were only prevented from giving them to the world *by an infamous combination of literary cliques*. Young Guffoon told me as much; and young Guffoon ought to know. I never mentioned the gunpowder business at Brompton, of course; that might have led to a "blow up" you know (isn't that a joke?); we gave snug little dinner parties, and quiet little dancing teas, and now and then a regular first-rate concert and soirée. I am not a vain man, but I think I can boast of having seen the prettiest girls and the



most genteel-looking parties—I mean men—in our suite of rooms at Arabella Lodge, that are visible anywhere out of Almack's or her Majesty's drawing-room.

In an evil hour—what do I say?—a fatal, an irrevocable hour, the path of our turtle-dove felicity was crossed by Captain Slyboots. My wife picked him up—yes, “picked him up” is the word—at the annual ball in aid of the funds for providing small-tooth combs for the destitute Shetland ponies, held at the Hanover Square Rooms. I had an engagement at Greenwich that day. I think the landlord of the Trafalgar wanted some gunpowder; at all events I went down, and half-a-dozen jolly fellows from the City, who, curiously, all had business in Greenwich that day, went with me. We dined together when business was over, and felt so exhausted with the mental anxiety we had gone through—you know how harassing business matters are—that we could not possibly get back to town till the last train. Lady Fang had kindly promised to be my wife's chaperon at the ball (which was a very exclusive one, vouchers, signed by two ladies patronesses, being requisite to procure a ticket, quite tip-top style) so I felt quite easy on my Arabella's account. When I returned home rather late that night—for feeling hungry after the railroad journey, I had dropped in to have some supper at my club—I found a white camellia in a glass of water on my wife's dressing-table. Her own bouquet, which I had sent her that morning from

Covent Garden, lay beside it all crumpled and faded. I never was of a jealous disposition—never! never! ha ha! hoo! never—and I thought no more about it. I know now who gave her that camellia.

The next morning Arabella told me all about Captain Slyboots. He was the most delightful creature, she said—so droll, so full of anecdote, so *truly distinguished*. He had been presented to her by Lady Fang herself, and was, indeed, a distant connection of her Ladyship. He, Slyboots, was the only son of Sir Crispin Slyboots, of Diddlecot Hall, Learyshire, immensely rich, captain in the 21st Hussars, and all the rest of it. It was by the merest chance that he happened to be in town so late in the year, but was in London, she believed, in order to settle something with the family lawyers about the estates in Learyshire. He had asked permission to call; permission had been granted, and he was to make a call that very day—a morning call. I am the most unsuspicious man breathing, and had my wife told me then—mark me, *then*—that the Sultan of Turkey, or Governor Brigham Young, or any other polygamical villain, was to call at Arabella Lodge, I should have driven into the City with a light heart. It was not long before I saw Captain Slyboots. I had to ask him to dinner before the week was over. He came very often, not too often for me *then*, for he had such insinuating, such persuasive ways about him, that I really liked the fellow. He found out all about the gunpowder, and rallied me—“chaffed,” he called it—in

a manner at which it was impossible to be offended, but for which I should like to kick him, now. He did me the honour—I mean he had the impudence to call on me in my office in the City one morning, and borrowed ten pounds of me in the most affable—I mean in the most jesuitical, manner. I must do him the justice to say that he paid me the money back: I wish he hadn't, that I might sue him, and accumulate costs against him, and immure him in a life-long dungeon. Saha! He was over six feet high, and had fair whiskers, which he curled; and fair hair, which he parted down the middle; and fair moustaches, which he twisted; and very white teeth, and a white hooked nose, like an eagle's beak. His eyes, as I have said, were blue. You see that to all appearance he was as like as two peas to the heavy swells one sees flattening their noses against the windows of the army and navy clubhouses, or smoking big Milo cigars outside four-in-hands; but Captain Slyboots was of a very different order. He wasn't solemn, and sheepish, and foolish, like the grandly-dressed young fellows one meets out. The wretch could sing and dance, and imitate the noises of animals, and play the banjo, and do tricks with the cards. He could mesmerise, and make pigs out of oranges. He was a dab at table-turning; could make a hat spin like a teetotum; knew lots of poetry and all that; talked about chemistry and Mr. Faraday; taught my wife *potielomanie* and modelling in wax; was the best archer—I had a target in my back garden—I ever knew, and played

the pianoforte brilliantly. Oh, he *was* sly, he was ! If I hadn't known him to be the son of a baronet, and heir to eight thousand a-year, I should have taken him to be a play-actor. All the girls who visited us were mad after him. Clara Cotchins (who has a good bit of money of her own, though her father is only Cotchins, R.A., the farm-yard painter) positively threw herself at him, like a boomerang ; but she came back again, also like a boomerang, and because Captain Slyboots wouldn't make love to her, she said he was a puppy. A puppy ! you might as well call a Bengal tiger a kitten. Mrs. Almond Tumbler conceived a violent hatred to my wife, because the Captain visited oftener at Arabella Lodge than in Thurlow Square, and took an early occasion to inform Captain Slyboots in strict confidence that we were only "people in the City,"—"something quite low," she believed. I should like to know what the Tumblers are, forsooth, if not people in Bedford Row, who make their living by grinding the noses of their unfortunate clients. I always hated lawyers. The Captain laughed, told my wife the story, and drew a pen-and-ink caricature of Mrs. Almond Tumbler—who had three distinct double chins, one under the other, like a flight of stairs going the wrong way—which sent us all into ecstasies of laughter.

You know what a rage there was last winter for private theatricals. From Woburn Abbey to Camberwell Grove the mania for amateur play-acting spread like an epidemic. Brompton didn't escape



the infection ; Kensington took it severely. The Pouter Pigeons gave a grand performance on New Year's Eve in the Gloucester Road, and a ball afterwards. A dramatised version of the "Old Curiosity Shop" was the piece of the evening, and Clara Pigeon, who is at least five feet eight inches high (she is called "Grenadier" in the domestic circle), insisted upon playing "Little Nell." To diminish from the effect of her stature, she wore a ridiculously short skirt, which made her look like an overgrown ballet-girl. To mend matters, Master Tom Pigeon, who is about six inches taller than his sister, must needs play "Quilp," and in order to give himself the appearance of a dwarf, he bent his legs and hunched his body to such an extent that in the middle of the piece he was seized with the cramps, and was carried off the stage. He wasn't seen again, but lay on the sofa behind the scenes, moaning dismally, while Miss Pitcher, the teacher from Minerva House, played airs from the "Trovatore" on the piano.

Of course, we must have our share in private theatricals, and early in the present year my wife propounded to me a notable plan for an amateur performance on the night of the 14th of February—Valentine's Day, as you know. I gave way to her, as I did in everything, *then*, and gave her a cheque into the bargain. The programme was most elaborate. First, we were to have a grand operatic selection by lady and gentlemen executants ; accompanist, the famous Signor Pappadaggi, who was my

wife's singing-master, and whom I would gladly have paid for his services (Arabella has—she *had* rather—a delicious contralto voice), but who insisted upon giving his gratuitous aid out of regard for Captain Slyboots, who was “ticklar frez of ‘is,” he said. After the opera was to come a solo on the bassoon by Jack Blunderbore, who is a friend of mine in the City (Blunderbore and Doublebarrel, gun-stock makers, Barbican), and whom I instructed, after his performance on the bassoon was over, to sit in a corner and not say one word until supper time, when I would make it up to him in game pie and champagne. Jack, who is one of the best-natured fellows alive, promised at once. To follow the bassoon, Clara Pigeon, the “Grenadier,” who is awfully “blue,” wanted to recite about half-a-dozen pages from Carlyle’s “Latter-day Pamphlets,” but I put a stop to *that*. “No infidel doctrines in my house, Mrs. S.,” said I; “one might as well have Tom Paine and the ‘Rights of Man,’ at once.” The performances were to end with an entirely new and *original* farce, written by Ethelred Guffoon, Esq., entitled “The Kiss and the Kick ; or, A Hint to Husbands.”

Guffoon, a good-natured young fellow enough, who wore peg-top trousers and a chin-tuft, was a clerk in the Nose-bag and Check-string section of the Hackney Carriage Department in the Inland Revenue Office, Somerset House. I don’t think that his official duties took up much of his time, for he found abundant leisure to write farces, paint impos-



sible landscapes on tinted paper, and make himself agreeable in genteel society, where, from his amiable manners and comic acquirements, he was highly popular. The mammas were not very anxious about him on account of their daughters one way or the other, for it was generally understood that he had a hopeless attachment for a marchioness, who wrote Latin verses and played the violoncello, and was thereby condemned to perpetual celibacy. He was good enough, as I have said, to write the farce of "The Kiss and the Kick" for us; and he was, in virtue of his indubitably vast theatrical experience, appointed stage manager, acting manager, prompter, and general director of our dramatic entertainments. There wasn't much plot in his farce, but there was a great deal of fun. The point on which the piece seemed to turn was this: that a Chevalier Somebody stole a kiss from the Marquise de Somebody Else, and that the Marquis, her injured husband, coming in at the very nick of time, revenged himself upon the Chevalier by inflicting on him a violent kick in the skirts of his brocaded coat. The scene of the piece had originally been laid in England—at Camberwell if I remember rightly—and the Chevalier, under the name of Prupper, was to have worn a grass-green coat with brass basket buttons, a white hat, speckled stockings, and nankeen inexpressibles; but, as the ladies thought that hoops and powder would look pretty—they had seen Mr. Harley and Miss Leclercq in "A Game at Romps" at the Princess's—and as the gentlemen

had no objection to bag wigs and swords (though some were slightly timorous about the effect of shorts and silk stockings till padding was suggested by the artful Captain Slyboots), the venue was changed to Versailles, and the kick was supposed to be inflicted for the kiss given in the palmy days of Louis the Fifteenth. Now, as a malignant fate would have it, Guffoon, who had the distribution of the parts, "cast" me—that was the term he used—for the Marquis, Arabella for the Marchioness, *and Captain Slyboots for the Chevalier*. I winced a good deal at this; for though no sensible husband ought to have any objection to his pretty wife being kissed (in fun) by an intimate friend—don't we do it all round in our game of forfeits at Christmas?—I could not bear the idea of Captain Slyboots' moustached lips touching my Arabella's cheek; of course he was only to kiss her cheek. I remonstrated with my wife, I privately entreated Guffoon to change the "casts;" I proposed, time after time, to change parts with Slyboots, offering to let him kick me with spurs on if he chose; but all to no avail. Everybody, friends included, declared that I was cut out for the Marquis; and at last, for fear of seeming to be jealous, and consequently ridiculous, I consented to waive my objection. "But what a kick I will give him," I thought to myself, "on the night of performance, to be sure!"

Would you believe it, that on the very first rehearsal of the farce, Captain Slyboots coolly told me that of course he should kiss Arabella! I

pointed out to him that such a proceeding at this stage was not only highly indecorous but wholly unnecessary; that a kiss was an operation that needed no rehearsing, and that both kissing and kicking could be postponed till the grand night. But my objections were scarcely uttered, before there arose from the audience (for we had a large audience at all the rehearsals) such a Babel of laughter and remonstrance, that I was almost stunned. "I ought to know better;" "I was paying a bad compliment to my wife;" "Of course Captain Slyboots must kiss her," and the like. Even old Lady Fang shook her snuff-box at me, and said, "Fie, fie, jealous man!" Some of them called me Bluebeard; and Miss Grenadier Pigeon quoted the lines about the "green-eyed monster." Miss Almond Tumbler told me plainly that I ought to be ashamed of myself; and my wife evinced such unmistakeable signs of beginning to cry, that I bowed my head and submitted. "Kiss her, Captain," I said, in a faint voice. Somehow, that kiss took a long time to rehearse; but when I really heard a good sounding smack, I rushed on to the stage—the carpet of the back drawing-room, I mean, and was about to assuage my wrath in kicks—in kicks, mind, not in a kick, when Ethelred Guffoon seized me round the waist, and from that detestable audience of women in the front drawing-room there arose a cry of "No! no! no! not till *the* night—not till *the* night!" Again did old Lady Fang shake her snuff-box at me: this time she called me

"Cruel, spiteful man, to want to kick dear Captain Slyboots more than once." Again did Arabella show symptoms of tears, and again, like a hound as I was, did I bow my head, and, to my shame and sorrow, submit. So Captain Slyboots kissed Mrs. Symes, and I wasn't allowed to kick him. Alaloo! vengeance!

My friends, this martyrdom went on for nearly a month. We had a rehearsal almost every day, sometimes twice a day. The instant I came back from Broad-street-buildings—and I very frequently missed going altogether, leaving my clerks, Cartooch and Squibber, junior, in charge—they were sure to "call the farce," and Mrs. S. went through her part, and I didn't go through mine, and Captain Slyboots did nothing but laugh and twirl pirouettes upon his military heels.

But on the 6th of February I walked—walked, sir—down to Toeser, my bootmaker, in Jermyn Street, St. James's.

"Toeser," I asked darkly, "are pointed toes worn now?"

"Rounds is most fash'nable," answered that tradesman; "though squares is preferred by county members and agricultural dooks, as doesn't give no return back on rents, but take it out in taking the chair at the farmers' ordinary. Turnups is low, bein' mostly worn by City gents and Hirish barristers."—I had always passed as a West-end swell with Toeser.

"Make me," I said, sternly and gloomily, "a pair



of the best Wellingtons—the strongest leather, mind; but they must be varnished, and cut as they are in this coloured print of the Duke de Richelieu, which I will leave with you: let the toes be of the sharpest and hardest you can make. Let there be double soles and iron heels” (for I thought that the affair might end seriously, and that it was as well to be prepared with means for stamping on my enemy), “and let me have them home without fail, by this day week. You understand.” Toeser bowed, and sniffed at an unfinished boot, his usual mode of expressing acquiescence in the wishes of a customer, and I left the shop with a lightened heart.

The boots came home on the 13th; and I did not go to the office that day, but passed the greater portion of my time in my dressing-room, gloating over the instruments of retribution as they gleamed on their trees. “I *will* kick him, and no mistake,” I thought.

By great good fortune it had been settled that, in order to relieve the monotony of shorts and silk stockings, I was to be a sporting marquis, and to wear buckskins and boots—*bottes à l'écuyère*, I think Guffoon called them. His Imperial Majesty Napoleon the Third wears similar boots when he goes out hunting.

I drove down to Broad-street-buildings for a couple of hours next morning—the morning of *the* day, just to see how things were getting on. Everything was progressing smoothly for the per-

formance. Simmons's men had brought the portable theatre and scenery; the costumes were to come from Nathan's; the supper was ordered, the supply of extra waiters laid on, the invitations duly sent out and responded to. I felt in high spirits, and giving my groom a holiday, took an omnibus back to Brompton, and arrived at Arabella Lodge about two in the afternoon.

I found my wife in her morning gown, and a flood of tears, on the sofa. With one hand she held her handkerchief to her face, in the other she clutched a letter.

"What is the matter, my poppet?" I said, carelessly, thinking that Simmons's men and the extra waiters had been too much for her nerves.

"G-g-g-g-gone," she sobbed.

"Who's gone?" I asked, thinking, perhaps, that our Admirable Crichton, the footboy, might, as a finishing stroke of genius, have absconded with the plate-basket.

G-O-O-O-ONE AWAY," she repeated, holding out the letter.

I seized the fatal epistle, I recognised the horribly familiar handwriting, and I read *this* :—

"MY DEAR MRS. SYMES (*his* dear Mrs. Symes, indeed!)—I much regret to say that I shall not be able to fill my part in your private theatricals of this evening. I have received orders from the Horse Guards to join my regiment at Bhowaljuggerpore, without a moment's delay. I leave by the



twelve o'clock train for Alexandria, *via* Dover and Marseilles, *en route* for Calcutta. Pray apologise for me to all our friends, especially to your husband, whom I am sincerely sorry to rob of *his legitimate retaliation*. I will write at length from Marseilles." —(Will he write at length from Marseilles?)

"Most truly yours,

"VULPUS REYNARD LUPUS SLYBOOTS."

I crushed up the abominable epistle in my hand; I folded my arms, and assuming the majestic look of Lucius Junius Brutus when he—but I really forget what he was doing when he did it—I said to Mrs. Symes—

"Madam"—I had never called her "Madam" but once before in my life, and that was when she was a Miss, and I apologised for treading on her toes while dancing with her at the Caledonian ball. "Madam, if she wasn't such an intolerable old catamaran that no human being could live with her, and be alive at the end of the week, I'd send you home to your mother. As it is, you will be kind enough to put off the absurd, disgusting, degrading tomfoolery of to-night. Say you are ill—that I am ill. Say, if you like, that I have cut my throat, and shall be back in a week." I was so agitated that I did not know what I said.

I left my wife in hysterics; sent her maid to her, and rushing out, called a Hansom cab, and told the cabman to drive me into town. I alighted at Essex Street, in the Strand, scarcely knowing

where I was going, and found myself somehow on the pier and aboard a steamer. I was landed at the Old Shades Pier ; if I had been landed at Copenhagen, it would have been all the same to me. As I was moodily threading my way towards Thames Street (as a long cut towards Broad-street-buildings), a little ragged urchin came tumbling head over heels before me, and importuned me to buy cigar-lights. I never did so cruel, so mean, so cowardly a thing in my life ; but I could not resist the instinct of being revenged on *somebody*. I caught the boy in a favourable position, and I gave him *one sounding kick* that sent him flying among the rabble rout of his companions with a howl that would have awakened the Seven Sleepers.

P.S.—Arabella and I are reconciled now. She has confessed to me, with many tears and kisses, that she never liked Captain Slyboots, and always thought him deceitful. Besides, old Lady Fang says that he has been engaged for years to his cousin, Miss De Loup.

I am happy again ; though occasionally nervous that Lady Fang should find out that we are City people ; but if Captain Slyboots ever comes back from India, and I meet him, I—I—I—I—I'll most certainly *cut him*.

# Caddy Grampus's Collection ;

OR, THE

## VENGEANCE OF THE CRYPTOCONCHOID SIPHONOSTOMATA.

### A TALE OF HORROR!

WHAT he could have been like as a boy—if he ever had been a boy at all—I can't imagine. He was THE nastiest old man! Caddy Grampus! "What's in a name?" the poet asks; but I should like to know what there was in Caddy Grampus's name besides age, ugliness, ill-temper, and a hundred disagreeable things besides. His name looked, and read, and sounded quite as repulsively as did his person. The crabbedest old man.

By the way, he was exceedingly like a crab, both in his body and his movements. A body, round one way, convex the other; long, lazy arms, and legs with which he rather crawled than walked; an irresistible propensity for wriggling about on the sea-shore; and an inconceivable tenacity in grasping what he had laid hold of: so far he was thoroughly cancerous. He was generally addicted, too, to wearing nankeen and gingham clothing, of a pale, parboiled, washed-out buff or pink hue; but

there his resemblance to a crab ended. Nobody but the disagreeable old fellow he was, could have had that intolerable old countenance. Besides, he took immoderate quantities of snuff, a practice to which I have not yet heard that crabs have devoted themselves. Some people said that his face was like a Nuremberg nutcracker, so carved, and notched, and twisted was it into wrinkles and gashes. Others declared stoutly that it resembled nothing so much as a cane-bottomed chair, because the surface of the skin was all holes and knots. He was always prowling about the neighbourhood of the sea, Caddy Grampus; yet the proverb of "the nearer the church," &c., might well have applied to him, for it was as strenuously believed in the port of Liverpool that Caddy Grampus never washed, as that the Manchester people were ill-bred rogues, and Liverpool itself the pink and pride of sea-ports, under the tutelary protection of that long-legged, but most unlikely bird, the Liver.

Caddy Grampus lived in Liverpool sixty years since. No St. George's Hall then, no colossal railway station, no grand Exchange and Custom-house, no Huskisson's statue or palatial sailors' home. A grimy, hard-working town, thriving more and more every year, and somewhat suspected of not having quite given up a *penchant* for the slave-trade. Caddy Grampus had been a supercargo in the West Indian trade; then a shipbroker in the Goree Piazzas; then a provision-merchant in Dale Street; then an "African Agent" on a large scale. I am certain



the old sinner had dealings in ebony flesh and blood, in addition to gold-dust, palm-oil, parrots, and elephants' teeth. He said he hadn't—that he never bought or sold a negro in his life. But who was to believe him? He was the WICKEDEST old man.

He had retired from business long since, and was reported to be immensely wealthy. *He* shook his crabby old head and denied, snarlingly, that he was worth a penny; but *I* wouldn't take his word. He dwelt in a dingy old house in St. Nicholas Lane—a boarded-up-windowed house, with a flight of steps in front, where he would sometimes sit on summer evenings, smoking a pipe of very rank tobacco, and comforting his wicked old waistcoat linings with copious libations of cold rum-and-water, mixed strong. He never offered anybody to partake of his refreshment. He never, if he could help it, passed the time of day to anybody. He never gave away a penny to a beggar or a bone to a dog; he kicked and cuffed them, did Caddy Grampus. He was THE surliest, nastiest, ugliest, grumpiest old curmudgeon that ever existed—a sort of mixture between the Old Man of the Mountain and John Elwes the miser.

Yet he had his weaknesses, Caddy, though he was as hard as a flint, and avaricious enough to skin it. He was an insatiable collector of Crustacea. He had in the dingy, boarded-up-windowed house quite a notable museum of crabs and lobsters, of astonishing size, and famed, so the tickets appended

to them said, in their lifetime for extraordinary voracity. Right up at the top of the house was Caddy Grampus's collection, and in a suite of four rooms, in glass cases, many-shelved, reaching from floor to ceiling, nay in presses cumbering the floor, so that you had scarcely room to turn, were his carefully dried and polished crustaceous preparations. He had specimens of the Podophthalmia, which, as you may not be wholly aware, have pedunculated eyes, and vergiform extremities, partially prehensile and partially ambulatory. He had specimens of the Decapods, such as the Brachyura (Cancer, Portunus, Grapsus), of the Anamourea (Dromia, Ranina, Pagurus, &c.); and of the Macrourea (Astacus, Scyllarus, Palæmon, &c.) In Stomapods he was not so wealthy, having only a few samples of Mysis, Phyllosoma, Squilla, and the like.

No British collector, however, could equal Caddy Grampus for his Edriophthalmia, his Branchiopoda (of course you know that they have the thoracic extremities lamellar), his Entomostraca, also, were worthy the attention of the curious; and his Araneiformes, Pycnogonic Nymphs, and edentated Teradiformes, had gained favourable suffrages from the most eminent crustaceous connoisseurs. In fossil specimens, even of the Trilobitic type, he possessed some organic remains in a fine state of preservation; in short, such a collection of shelly creatures, with their innumerable antennæ, their horns and pincers, their carapaces and oviducts,



their palpi and vesicular respiratories, their branchiæ and compound eyes, their lenticular bodies and gegarcine haustellations, had never been seen before, and has never been seen since, in the county of Lancaster, or in the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Caddy Grampus was visited by the most distinguished members of the scientific world, native and foreign. He corresponded with Professor Kczarskoëwycksky, of the University of Cracow, and as the Professor wrote in Polish, and Caddy in (indifferent) English, and as neither understood the other's language, much benefit to science must have resulted from their interchange of ideas. Doctor Van der Hoogenstracht came all the way from Leyden to inspect Caddy's collection; and the collectors declared that the doctor did not come at dusk, wrapped in a horseman's cloak, for nothing, and that he made a desperate attempt to seize and carry away the claw of the *Astacus Atrox*. But why didn't Caddy cry thieves, or indict the knavish doctor at the sessions? that is what I should like to know. I think Caddy *feared publicity*, and that some ugly stories relative to the mode in which he acquired his prize specimen of the *Gegarcimus Vorans*, might have come to light, between sessions and 'sises.

The disagreeable old fellow was miserly to the extreme in everything else, almost denying his household the necessaries of life; but in purchasing additions to his collection he was speculative, liberal, lavish, almost generous. Mates of vessels trading

to foreign parts, masters of fishing smacks that ventured so far as the North Sea, had standing commissions to bring home any remarkable specimens of shell-fish, with which they might meet during their cruises, for Caddy Grampus's account, and at a fair price. He was always hankering about the vessels in the port, tampering with the sailors as to any strange fish they had seen. Cases and barrels, containing hideously-smelling crustacea, were continually being consigned to him. But one thing was wanting to his happiness. He had never as yet been able to procure a specimen of the CRYPTOCONCHOID SIPHONOSTOMATA, a monstrous crustacean, so travellers said, of the Lord Mayor's Man of Brass, which was supposed to haunt the South American coasts, and was most frequently to be met with in certain bays and inlets in the Brazils. Vainly, time after time, had Caddy endeavoured to bribe, to induce, captains of merchantmen to bring him home the desiderated shell-fish. They all said they had sought, but that they could not find. The Cryptoconchoid Siphonostomata was to Caddy Grampus as a red swan, a blue diamond, a black tulip, a four-leaved shamrock, or a roc's egg.

At home in the dingy house the collector had a Wife, whose principal occupations were to dust the glass cases in the museum, and to cry her eyes out. The first I mean literally, and the act was decidedly against her will. She hated lobsters, save in salad, and could not "abide" crabs under any circumstances. The second statement is to be taken

metaphorically, and the act was a voluntary one. Nobody could tell why Lucy Morell, who was young and pretty, should have married such an unfavourable specimen of humanity as Caddy Grampus. It couldn't have been for love; nobody could ever have loved him. It could scarcely have been for his money, for he grudged her even the necessary funds to keep house with, and made no secret of his intention to leave his collection, and "all the rest of it"—that meant his wealth, of course, to government. You see that there is nothing new under the sun, not even a Sir John Soane or a Mr. Angerstein.

And, besides, which renders the affair still more mysterious, Lucy oughtn't to have been married to Caddy Grampus at all: if for no other reason than for this, that she had been engaged for years to Tom Scargill. Tom was a distant connection of Caddy Grampus—a sort of tenth cousin—and was believed to be the only relative the old man had on earth. He, for his part, testified his sense of his consanguinity by cheating Tom out of his inheritance; for he had been left guardian to him, and trustee of a very nice little property bequeathed by the lad's father. But Caddy Grampus made out that the elder Scargill owed him money, and that there were deeds and mortgages, and so forth, and lawyer Fennell was called in, and then they took it to Lancaster before the Chancellor of the Duchy, and even to London town, where some gentlemen in wigs were going to commit young Tom to jail for



contempt, though, goodness knows, he was as respectful a young fellow as you would wish to meet, and always touched his cap to the clergyman. The end of it was, that Caddy Grampus got all and Thomas Scargill nothing. The young man, almost broken-hearted, almost despairing, went away from Liverpool, too wretched even to bid farewell to his sweetheart. Of course people said that he had run away, and that Teazum, the beadle, wanted him. Don't you believe people. At the end of two years, not making his appearance, it began to be noised about that Tom Scargill was dead—a report which Caddy Grampus surlily encouraged, stating even that he had read the account of his death, by drowning, at Jamaica, in the *Public Advertiser*. So it was the story of Janet and Auld Robin Gray over again without the romance; and somehow—I can't make out how these unequal matches are made—Lucy Morell became the bride of Old Caddy Grampus.

She had been married some twenty months, when, on a bleak afternoon at the end of the year, she sat at one of the three windows of the dingy house that were not boarded up, looking dully and cheerlessly into Nicholas Lane. She thought of her blighted youth—of her dead and scathed love. Her heart reproached young Tom for a moment for never writing to her; but a thousand reasons she acknowledged might have prevented him—and in a moment she forgave him. Had she not too been false to her

troth ! She thought of her cross and churlish mate. How he stinted her for money : how he made her slave at dusting the cases of that eternal museum : she had but just now concluded her daily task, and the grim crustacea, with their distended claws and antennæ, and their "compound eyes," terrified her meek spirit. She thought upon his overbearing and vexatious temper, and on how he threatened to "nip" her—the old man-crab—if she did not do his bidding. Oh ! he was an ugly customer, Caddy Grampus.

It was growing dark, and Nicholas Lane was almost deserted, when Lucy's attention was attracted to the form of a stranger, who, leaning against one of the houses opposite, was staring with most unaccountable persistency at the very window where she was sitting, and, as it seemed, in at the very pane through which she was looking. He stared so long and so fixedly, that Lucy at last, through sheer feminine curiosity, of course, could not refrain from opening the window just one little morsel—the glass was so dusty and dim—and gazing out on the stranger herself. She did not faint, she did not scream—she had never been a girl given to screaming or fainting ; but she drew back suddenly, her hands clasped, her cheek blanched, her lips quivering, her whole frame trembling. The stranger's face was bronzed, his form was burly, his apparel was that of a sailor just come home from a voyage ; but Lucy could not forget the eyes, the parted



smiling lips, just showing the white teeth. Not dead! not dead! thank heaven! It was young Tom Scargill.

But she, alas!—

History is silent as to how long Lucy kept the window open; whether she approached it again or not, and whether the sunburnt and resuscitated Tom Scargill remained staring at the dingy house from over the way all night. I only hope Mrs. Grampus was not so imprudent as to run downstairs, open the door, hurry down the steep steps, cross the lane with three bounds, and fling herself sobbing into her old love's arms; entreating her dear, dear, dearest Tom to forgive his unhappy Lucy. Such things would never do in a well-ordered community, you know; besides, Caddy Grampus would have "nipped" his wife fiercely had he known about it. The old "Rooshian!"

This, however, history can be sufficiently eloquent about, and it is certain that all Liverpool talked enough about the matter for days and weeks together, to remove anything like a doubt respecting the authenticity of this relation. Exactly two years and one day from the evening when Lucy was sitting so mournfully at her window, and the sunburnt sailor was gazing with such intensity thereat, she changed her name of Grampus for the far more euphonious appellation of Scargill. The thing was done with the full approbation of her relatives and friends, with the connivance (for a consideration) of the

District Registrar of Marriages, and with the sanction of the ecclesiastical authorities, as represented by the parson and his clerk, within the communion rails of Old St. Nicholas Church, Liverpool, assembled. Thomas Scargill, bachelor, was married to Lucy Grampus, Widow, and everybody, like the gallant admiral in the ballad of "Billy Taylor," when they "came for to hear on't," "very much applauded what she'd done."

But how came it all about? How did Lucy become haply a widow? How did she get rid of that uncomfortable Caddy? You shall hear. The first astonishing thing was, that Mr. Grampus didn't come home to Nicholas Lane the night of Tom's re-appearance. The second astonishing thing was, that the collector didn't come back to the dingy house for a whole year. The third—and most astonishing—thing was, that he never came back at all!

The last that was ever seen by the Liverpudlians of Caddy Grampus, was on that same wintry afternoon so often alluded to. He was seen to go into the "Weevil and Biscuit," an hostelry much frequented by mariners, and close to George's Dock, in company with John Logg, commonly called "Mahogany Jack," boatswain of the good ship *Lobsouse*, and that same good ship sailed, notwithstanding the wintry weather, that very evening from the Mersey to the Brazils.

Now, thirteen months being gone and past, the

*Lobsconise*, with a considerable amount of barnacles added to her keel, cast anchor again in the Mersey, and "Mahogany Jack," still boatswain of that good ship, coming on shore in the pinnace, and halting to recruit exhausted nature at the "Weevil and Biscuit," made his way straight to the dingy house in Nicholas Lane, where Lucy dwelt in a state of doubtful widowhood—though with a comforter in the shape of her mother—I hope that seafaring young Thomas, coming home from his Belfast voyages (he was in that trade now), was never invited to tea, and never stayed supper—and that then and there the same "Mahogany Jack," did deliver to the amazed Lucy the following astounding narrative and relation of facts: setting forth, imprimis:

How the facts were all true, and could be vouched for by the captain and crew of the *Lobsconise*, as set down in writing, and witnessed before the British consul at Rio, and others his Britannic Majesty's representatives on the Spanish Main.

How Caddy Grampus, meeting with "Mahogany Jack," as before explained, and questioning him as to the existence of any remarkable specimens of shell-fish in the latitudes he had visited, had been by him informed of the whereabouts of a certain monstrous crustacean called the "hog-in-armour" lobster, which was to be seen alive in the bay of Alapaxameda, forty miles south of Rio de Janeiro, and to the number of innumerable myriads; a



lobster which was currently reported among the crew to have size and strength enough to swallow a Lifeguardsman whole, jack-boots, sabre, pigtail and all.

How Caddy Grampus pressed him, both by offers of pecuniary reward and passionate entreaties, extending even to tears, to undertake the capture of one of these monstrous lobsters, saying that it was a cryptosomething or other, with a very long tail, which he, "Mahogany Jack," could not remember, and for which he said he would give all he was worth, even to his collection. How Jack unwillingly declined all these offers, knowing, from the notorious ferocity of the fish, the utter impossibility of the task, and not wishing to pledge himself to its performance under false pretences. How in a fit of enthusiasm, increased perhaps by his continuous replenishment of his bumper of cold rum-and-water, Caddy Grampus declared that if the "hog-in-armour"—but he called it by its long name—could not be brought to him, he would go himself to the "hog-in-armour," and braving an eight or nine months' voyage out and in, would take passage in the *Lobscurse*. How he at first expressed a desire to return home, settle his affairs, make his will, and, as he expressed it, "just give that wife of his a good 'nip,'" but being told that the *Lobscurse* was even then preparing to work out of dock, he caused himself to be conveyed on board, in an extraordinary state of enthusiasm,



rum, and a wherry, made terms at once with the captain, and started that very night.

Well!

Well, according to "Mahogany Jack's" solemn asseveration, he was conveyed to his destination, and at his special request was rowed in one of the ship's boats, to a jutting groin of rock in the bay of Alapaxameda.

Well!

It is too horrible, too dreadful, but confound him! he was THE wickedest old man, and the truth shall out.

*Caddy Grampus fell a victim to the strength and ferocity of the Cryptoconchoid Siphonostomata, which resorted in shoals to the bay of Alapaxameda. The horrified mariners watched him from the boat, pottering with his creels and spears on the rock. They saw him make a false step, disappear with a shriek in the white surge, then reappear, battling with legions of those gigantic crustacea. They saw the last struggle, the ensanguined wave—as "Mahogany Jack" said, with terrible brevity—*

"THE OGGS-IN-HARMOUR HATE 'IM HUP."

Caddy Grampus died intestate, and the depositions of the crew of the *Lobscouse* being admitted as proof of his death, his widow administered to his estate. She sold the collection for a round sum, though much below its scientific value, to Mynheer Cornelius Van Swammerdam, agent to the museum

of Spitzbergen. The widow and Thomas lived long afterwards, and very happily, on the proceeds: although there were not wanting censorious and envious people, who declared that the story of Caddy Grampus's voyage to Brazil, and his conflict with the Cryptoconchoid Siphonostomata was all fudge; that he was in reality spirited away by a press-gang, that he afterwards deserted his ship at Barbadoes, took to evil marine courses, as he had formerly done to bad land ones, and was hanged for piracy, at Execution Dock, in 1803. Be it as it may, he was THE worst old man, and any fate served him perfectly right.

## A Purse or a Coffin,

THE TRUE STORY OF LADY DURBAR.

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I TELL the following story almost exactly "as it was told to me." I have amplified little and exaggerated nothing. The names, for obvious reasons, have been changed. The facts—*they are facts*—on which the tale is founded strike me as very much resembling what the late S. T. Coleridge was wont to call "psychological curiosities." The whole is but an illustration of the astonishing contradictions daily and hourly to be met with in that more astonishing combination of good and evil—of nobility and meanness—of sincerity and hypocrisy—of generosity and avarice—the human character. With frightful force will be found here exemplified the truth of the Divine aphorism—"The heart of man is deceitful above all things, *and desperately wicked.*"

### I.

#### A GOOD WOMAN.

"Charity covereth a multitude of sins." In the case of Lady Durbar, however, charity's task must

have been almost a sinecure, so few sins had her Ladyship, to all appearances, to cover. Very rare are the ladies or gentlemen of whom *all* speak well, at whom *none* point the finger of censure, or about whose ears the breath of scandal buzzes not; but you might have walked through every street, square, crescent, and terrace of the censorious and scandal-loving town of B——, and over ten miles of its environs withal, any three hundred and sixty odd days out of the year, and still heard nothing but praise, loud, enthusiastic, and heartfelt, of the Lady Durbar. The poor literally adored her. With the ample means with which she had been blessed by Providence she soothed many an aching heart, and made many a desolate home cheerful. Disdaining to confine herself to the conventionalisms of fine-lady charity in the country—to a parsimonious dole of blankets and unlimited supply of cheap tracts—the beneficent lady was unceasing in her solicitude for the comforts of the less fortunate of her fellow-creatures. There is a vast amount of physical misery in B——, Belgravian as it is in its watering-place gentility; and many a den of squalor and filth, of want and hunger, of profligacy and intemperance, did the lady visit in the course of her Samaritan wanderings, and light up with the glow of her tenderness and mercy. Hovels and shebeens, where the Protestant curate would have shuddered to set foot, where even the catholic priest might have hesitated to tread, appalled not the Lady Durbar; no tale of misery ever encountered an inatten-



tive or an unmoved auditor in her; no appeal was ever made in vain to her purse-strings or her influence.

She was, of course, often imposed upon. Divers horrible cutaneous afflictions were got up artistically with orpiment and rose-pink for her especial deception; the consumptive (such is the hypocrisy of mankind!) would cough twice as loudly and twice as hoarsely when her well-known form was shadowed on the threshold; little children would look hungrier, squalid grandams would gather their rags around them with an aspect of bleaker chillness; artisans out of work would look more depressed, and always hard-worked women appear more jaded and careworn, when Lady Durbar entered their dwellings.

Innumerable were the remorseless landlords, whose cruel hands she had arrested in the very act of depriving her *protégés* of their furniture. She had paid out innumerable brokers. Countless were the pawned articles of furniture or raiment she had redeemed, even though the articles in question—as not unfrequently happened—were her own gifts. Multifarious were the orphan boys she had apprenticed, the orphan brides she had portioned. Donations of blankets, Bibles, coals, bacon, mattresses, Welsh flannel, elderberry wine, and sarsaparilla, flowed from her in an inexhaustible stream. The Lady Durbar was a thoroughly charitable woman.

Few charitable institutions were there in the three kingdoms, or, indeed out of them, to which

she was not a liberal subscriber and benefactor. Widows, orphans, soldiers, sailors, miners, the blind, the lame, the halt, the paralytic, and the phthisical, all came within the sphere of her beneficence. Nor were foreigners and aliens—Turks, Jews, or Heretics—excluded from her bounty. Her name headed the subscription lists of scores of missionary societies, and many a Cruel Islander owed his ribbed flannel waistcoat, many a Katchakarvodlum Indian his warming pan, hundred-bladed penknife, and edifying hymn-book, to the charity of Lady Durbar.

Nor did she give alms as the Pharisee. She emphatically "did good by stealth, and blushed to find it fame." Yet did she know the value of the "bell-wether" in every charitable troupeau, and therefore did she not object occasionally to the publication of her name in a subscription list, the liberality and frequency of her contributions acting as incentives to her less actively charitable acquaintance. But to a far greater extent did she prefer the pleasure of being an anonymous caster into the chest. Two humble initials, a simple anagram, a simpler motto, often sufficed to veil the donor of a really princely gift to some hospital, school, or charity. Newspapers at Christmas time abounded with short but pithy paragraphs setting forth the receipt at such-and-such a police-court, of five and ten guinea subscriptions towards the funds of the poor-box, sent by "D." and sometimes "Lady ——" She subscribed for the burnt-out tradesman, the reduced clergyman, the shipwrecked master mariner's orphan

daughters. The lists for the benefit of the widow of a "late officer of rank in H.M. service" abounded with contributions from "Anonymous," "A Sympathiser," or "A Friend." It was Lady Durbar who was anonymous, the sympathiser, and the friend.

It may readily be imagined that she was beloved to enthusiasm by all those who knew her. The very mention of her honoured name was sufficient to raise a storm of applause at a May meeting at Exeter Hall, or at a benevolent soirée at the Hanover Square Rooms. Anxious friends thronged her door and inundated her hall-porter with cards of condolence were she visited with ever so slight an ailment; and it was even rumoured that so struck with her many virtues was Mr. Pix, the worthy vicar of B——, that he proclaimed his intention, some Sunday or other, of preaching in full congregation a sermon on the merits of Lady Durbar. He never did so, however, being doubtless too much occupied in his feud and controversy with Mr. Patten, the Incumbent of the opposition proprietary chapel, as to the exact prospects in a future state of still-born children.

I have been so eager to tell you how much good Lady Durbar effected, that I have omitted to mention the source of the wealth of which she made so admirable a use. Nor, indeed, have I been at all communicative respecting her personal appearance, manners, conversation, &c. I must hasten to atone for these shortcomings.

The Lady Durbar was the only daughter of a rich East India banker and agent, who had amassed an immense fortune in those halcyon days when the pagoda-tree was still to be shaken, and nabobs and their jagheris were not yet myths. Being a rich man—a very rich man—he could not, of course, do anything in a mean or insignificant way. Thus, when he failed in the great crash of 1825, it was for no paltry one or two score thousand pounds, but for a good million and a half sterling. There was a tremendous sensation in the City and on 'Change when it became known that the great agency firm of Mango, Chutnee, Cholopp, Chowringee-Chobahawder and Co. were "gone." There was quite a crowd in Old Broad-street, gazing at the closed doors and barred shutters of the bankrupt house. Our heroine's papa, Sir John Mango, at once proceeded to India to make efforts to "wind up" the affairs of the Calcutta house. Arrived there, no doubt can exist that he betook himself with much assiduity to the task of winding up. In fact, he wound himself away altogether; and, beyond the report that he had married a Begum, and had a very large zenana in the dominions of some native prince, he was never seen or heard of more.

Fanny Mango, then eighteen years of age, beautiful and accomplished, saw before her three very disagreeable alternatives—to go out as a governess, to take up her residence with two deaf and remarkably cantankerous aunts at Brixton, or to marry. Not that marriage is, to the majority of young



ladies, such a very disagreeable alternative ; but the only suitor whom the daughter of the fugitive banker could at that time command was one Sir Hugh Durbar, a general in the Company's service—rich, bilious, ill-tempered, and fifty-seven years of age. There was certainly *par dessus le marché*, a cousin of Fanny's, Fred. Elton by name, who was young, sound-livered, good-tempered, and clever ; but he was poor as it was possible for a solicitor's clerk to be with eighty pounds a year, and a bed-ridden mother to keep. Marriage with him was of course quite out of the question. Sir Hugh was in the direction, and a shareholder, besides, in no end of banks and indigo-houses. He had a house in Park Lane, and a villa at Twickenham ; and, to make a long story short, some twelvemonths after the flight of her father, Fanny Mango became Lady Durbar.

Speedily she had bitter cause to regret the ill-assorted union. Her husband led her, for the twelve years that his ill-favoured career was prolonged, what is commonly termed the life of a dog. Constant ill-humour, chronic and querulous ill-health, brutal language, and not by any means rarely brutal violence, were the most salient characteristics of Sir Hugh Durbar. The lady bore it all like an angel. Her meekness and her patience under suffering were the theme of universal surprise and admiration. She swathed his gouty feet, she administered his colchicum, she bore his blows and curses with inexhaustible resignation, and sweetness of temper.

Suddenly Sir Hugh took it into his head that he would travel on the Continent, and travel, too, alone. His wife, however, always tenderly solicitous, insisted on accompanying him as far as B——, in which charming bathing-place, and on the East Cliff, he had a mansion. There she remained awaiting his return—a return, however, that never came; for Sir Hugh Durbar died at Civita Vecchia, of gout in the stomach, just six months after his departure from B——, leaving his ill-used wife, it must be admitted considerably to his credit, the whole of his large fortune, without stipulation or reserve.

The news of her husband's death profoundly affected Lady Durbar. She was for a lengthened period perfectly inconsolable, and openly avowed her determination to wear mourning for the deceased as long as she lived. Thenceforth she gave up the pomps and vanities of the world. She saw no gay company, she went to no balls or parties, but devoted herself wholly and entirely to the practice of charity and good works.

Let me give you a sketch of her abode and of herself. She lived in a red-brick mansion, sober and substantial, but decidedly sombre. The drawing-room was large and old-fashioned, and covered with a Turkey carpet; heavy curtains shrouded the windows; the furniture was decorated with a kind of dull, subdued splendour. In the centre of the apartment was a mahogany table, heaped with religious books and tracts, with half-made-up flan-

nels, packets of tea and sugar, work-boxes, writing materials, files and letter-clips, visiting cards, printed circulars, worsted work, &c. Imagine sitting at this table a lady of commanding stature, and who must once have possessed beauty as commanding. There is an indescribable tinge of meekness and melancholy, of resignation and long-suffering, lingering in her large, wistful grey eyes, and in the lines of her mouth. She is attired in black velvet, and wears a widow's cap, though her husband, Sir Hugh, has been dead these twenty years. Her hair is rich and glossy, and not yet grey. This is the Lady Durbar.

She rises at six, winter and summer, and at eight reads prayers in the dining-room to the servants. From breakfast to lunch-time she writes or reads good books, or, like Dorcas, makes clothes for the poor. From lunch-time till three in the afternoon she gives audience to ambassadors on charitable missions. From three to five she rides in her grave and soberly-decorated carriage from one abode of misery to another, carrying relief and solace with her wherever she goes. Then home, to a plain, substantial dinner; then, perchance, a quiet, decorous cup of tea or game at chess with the clergyman, or the solicitor, or her physician. Then evening prayers again, and after half-past ten not a light will you see in any window of Lady Durbar's mansion. So passed the current of her life. So passed, in the odour of piety and charity, the twenty years following the demise of her husband.

But, *ay di me!* what says the Trappist? "Brother, we must die!" The Lady Durbar fell sick.

## II.

## DEATH'S HAND.

There is about a house when Death is on the threshold or in the chamber an indefinable something, a feeling, a prescience, an oppression to be felt nowhere else, and never to be forgotten when once felt. The atmosphere seems denser and closer—almost stifling at times—there is an indistinct humming, a drowsy purring, a buzzing around you.

Death is in the house! We speak softly and tread lightly on the stairs, holding our breath as we pass the chamber in which it lies in state. Talk of the death watch! What can equal in solemn and mysterious horror the sound of the undertaker's knock? Ugh! a sultry summer's evening, when the messengers of the grave come gliding up the stairs with list shoes, their grim burden—to be made more awful presently—between them. Did *you* ever hear an undertaker's knock about nine in the evening, reader? If you ever have you will never forget that monotonous verberation.

Death was on the threshold of the Lady Durbar's mansion. The road before the house was strewn with tan. The knocker was muffled, the bell-pull untwisted. Tradesmen and servants glided stealthily up and down the area steps; visitors held cautious



conference with the hall-porter through the half-closed doorway.

It was Christmas Day—a bitter Christmas, too. The snow had fallen heavily during the day, and powdering the dark tan before the door, made it look like a twelfthcake of evil omen. As night closed in, rain began to fall mingled with the snow, and a sharp east wind blew.

It was six o'clock in the evening. Two carriages were standing before the door—Doctor Phillby, the physician's, the Rev. Mr. Pix, the rector's. Let me, with the storyteller's privilege, enter the mansion and walk up-stairs.

In the drawing-room five persons were assembled. Standing before the fire, his coat-tail spread to the genial blaze, was Mr. Squill, her ladyship's own apothecary (Dr. Phillby had been specially called in, and was now up-stairs with the sick lady). Near the apothecary, in an arm-chair, his hands demurely crossed, was Mr. Pix. At the table, moodily sipping some wine, which had followed a hasty repast, were two young men—one, from his raven suit and white neckcloth, apparently a clergyman; the other bluff, hale, thickset, as a country squire should be. A third young man, in the undress uniform of a cavalry regiment—indeed, he had but just ridden over from the barracks in the Lewes Road—was pacing hurriedly up and down the room, his jingling spurs and accoutrements jarring strangely on the general stillness. These three young men were the nephews of Lady Durbar.

The stern and solemn quietude of these five persons had in it something lugubrious and significant. Strong men as they were, they seemed not to dare to speak, or endeavour to pass the time in the ordinary unmeaning conventionalities of conversation. To every man's mind there was present the image of a certain front bedchamber on the second floor; in every man's mind there reigned supreme the thought that in that bedchamber the sands of life were fast ebbing away; that a form now writhing in and sentient of pain would soon be stiff; that eyes now lambent with the last flickering of the torch of life would soon be quenched; that for the being faintly murmuring and gasping above stairs the washers and upholsterers of mortality would soon be needed; that, in a word, Death was in the house.

Suddenly the door opened, and Dr. Phillby appeared.

"A bad case, I am afraid, gentlemen," he said. "A bad case. There is, I am afraid, no hope for our patient."

"No hope!" exclaimed the young officer, the youngest of the three brothers.

"No hope!" echoed the country squire-looking nephew.

"No hope!" mused the young clergyman. He added, *sotto voce*, "And she has made no will!"

This was the key to the perturbed anxiety of the three nephews. Lady Durbar had fallen suddenly ill, and not the slightest clue existed with regard to

her testamentary intentions. The three nephews had all been treated by her with equal kindness and affection. A good living had been secured for the clergyman; a capital freehold farm for the countryman; the young officer's commission had been purchased, and his not inconsiderable debts had been paid for him at least three several times. But no distinctive favourite had been made, and the three nephews were consequently in the dark as to which of them would inherit the large property of which they knew (notwithstanding her boundless generosity) their aunt would die possessed. Mr. Pix, moreover, may have had some little misgivings as to whether the Cruel Islanders, or the Katchakarvodlum Indians had been remembered by their former benefactress. The physician and apothecary thought it improbable that mementos in the shape of mourning-rings or silver teapots might be left them. Altogether, nephews, parson, doctor, apothecary—though, of course, all devotedly attached to Lady Durbar, and *desolés* at the thought of her approaching dissolution—would have been all the easier in their minds had they known for certain whether Mr. Tapes, her ladyship's legal adviser, was the custodian of a certain document paying probate duty, and called a last will and testament.

"Her Ladyship," suggested Mr. Pix, softly, following up the conversation I have by a digression so unceremoniously interrupted, "may have executed a will, and ——"

"She may not," observed Mr. Squills.

"She might *now*, even," mildly suggested the young clergyman.

Dr. Phillby shook his head.

"She might at least hold a pen, or have it held for her," the officer remarked, bluntly.

"As easily, my young friend," answered the physician, blandly, "as she could hold that sabre of yours in the steel scabbard, which, permit me to add, makes somewhat more noise, conjointly with your spurs, than is exactly suited to the vicinity of a sick chamber."

"I tell you what it is," broke in the countryman nephew, draining off a mighty bumper of port wine, and bringing his brawny fist heavily to bear on the table; "I tell you what it is, Aunt Fanny's far too sensible a woman not to have made a will. But why don't you, instead of bothering your heads as to whether she has not, settle among yourselves who is to pluck up courage to step up-stairs and ask her? I will, if nobody else volunteers."

The physician shook his head again. "Speechless, my dear sir."

"But she can nod yes or no."

"Perfectly insensible to external influences."

"Hush! hush! pray hush, my young friends!" broke in Mr. Pix. "Surely this discussion over the not yet inanimate form of your poor revered relation, is, to say the least, indecent."

"Humph!" muttered the countryman.

"Ah!" sighed the parson.



The dragoon said nothing. He had taken off his sabre and laid it across a chair when reproved by Dr. Phillby. He now sat down beside it and played with the sword-knot.

Suddenly there came a sound of hurried footsteps overhead. The physician and apothecary, mutely enjoining silence, quitted the apartment. Then, after the interval of a few minutes, more footsteps were heard descending the stairs, the door opened, and the Lady Durbar's maid hastily entered the drawing-room.

She was a rubicund, merry-looking little body, this lady's-maid, at most times; far too merry-looking for the severe and staid Durbar household, but her face was now ashy white.

"Oh, if you please, sir!" she exclaimed, addressing herself to Mr. Pix; "my lady is much worse. You must come upstairs, if you want to see the last of her."

Silent and appalled the four men obeyed the summons, and followed the lady's-maid upstairs.

"See how a Christian can die," said Addison to the young Earl of Warwick. Reader, listen to the story of the end of Lady Durbar.

Nine o'clock had struck. The sleet and hail scourged the window-frames of the bedchamber; the night wind blew in wild and fitful gusts. The room was large and handsomely furnished, thickly carpeted, and was pervaded by the odour of some strong and subtle Indian perfume which Lady

Durbar was strangely attached to, and which, in despite of the remonstrance of her medical attendants, she persisted in using. It seemed an odd whim, an eccentricity on her part; for no one could tell where she placed the perfume, or why she never used it in any other apartment of the house.

There was a large four-post bedstead in the centre of the room, with heavy, funeral-like hangings. In this bed lay the moribund.

She was quite speechless, and to all appearance insensible.

The three nephews stood at the foot of the bed, the clergyman with them. On one side of the dying woman were the doctors, on the other the lady's-maid. No one spoke a word. Gloom, awe, terrible suspense, were supreme.

Everywhere, save in the FIRE, which, bright and sparkling as seacoal and a billet of wood could make it, crackled and leaped joyously, sending its bright tongues of flame and fiery smoke far up the ample chimney. A cheerful fire! A jovial fire! A roaring fire!

Just then the clock struck ten, and a wilder gust of wind shook the window-frames. Even above that the moan of the troubled sea was audible. *Just then, curiously, one of those red-hot cinders we call, from the ringing sound they make when cold, "PURSES," and sometimes, from their odd, long shape, "COFFINS," flew out from the cheerful fire and fell on the hearthrug, where it lay for a moment scorching the woollen fabric beneath.*

For a moment only. The glowing cinder had scarcely fallen when the dying woman sprang from the bed. Speechless and apparently insensible, she yet walked erect and firm. Taking the tongs from their nook, she advanced to where the cinder lay smoking and crackling, clutched it with the instrument, flung it back into the fire, then fell forward on the hearth—DEAD !

Dead.

And is that all the story ?

Not all. The first emotions of terror and grief over, the body raised, the melancholy offices for the dead seen to, the gentlemen returned to the discussion of the question of the will.

There was none, to all appearance, extant. Mr. Tapes, when questioned, denied all knowledge of the existence of such a document. If the Lady Durbar *had* made a will, she must with her own hands have hid it somewhere.

The three nephews, the clergyman, the doctors, and the lawyer, were again assembled in the chamber of death. The body was in the coffin, and they had come to gaze upon it for the last time.

"There *must* be a will," muttered the dragoon nephew.

"What's this ?" exclaimed the countryman, looking at a little black round hole in the hearthrug, immediately in a line with the head of the coffin, standing on its tressels.

It was where that *other* coffin—for it *was* a coffin, and no purse—had fallen from the fire.

"I'm not a believer in omens," said the physician, looking round ; "but I really should not be surprised if we found a will beneath this spot."

"Take up the hearthrug !" cried the dragoon.

"We'll have the carpet up," exclaimed the countryman.

The hearthrug and the carpet were taken up : the "coffin" cinder had burnt through both.

"I do really believe," here interposed the lady's-maid, who had stolen on tiptoe into the room, "that my lady kept a strong box or something of the sort just there, for there's a bulging like in the drawing-room ceiling, and has been for years, just underneath that spot."

When the boards were laid bare, a considerable discoloration of the floor was visible—a brown discoloration, extending two or three feet from the common centre made by the black round hole burned by the cinder.

"We'll have the flooring up !" cried the three nephews.

A carpenter was sent for and commenced his task.

"Phew !" he exclaimed, stopping short. "How strong that Indian scent my lady was so fond of smells !"

Then he went——

A sudden cry of horror, of dreadful terror and amazement !

God knows by what half-distinguished scrap of



clothing, what half-effaced lineament, what half-remembered trinket, it was recognised and known ! But there it was. *From beneath where the cinder had fallen was dragged out the rotting body of Sir Hugh Durbar !*

Had he ever been to Civita Vecchia, or, returning, had he met his end here, murdered in his own bedchamber, buried before his own hearth ? And by whom ? Who knows ? Who shall know till all things are discovered and the end comes ?

## Qualk the Circumnavigator.

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THE Royal Commission for improving the condition of the Fine Arts holds periodical sittings in the new palace at Westminster, under the presidency of that illustrious Prince, whose name, like that of the famous archer of nursery story, begins with an A ; but I have not yet heard that Mr. Herbert or Mr. Dyce has been commissioned to paint a fresco for the Peers' robing-room, immortalizing the exploits of Qualk. I have waited impatiently, since the termination of the discussion as to whether Cromwell was to have a statue or not, for an official notification that Mr. Baily or Baron Marochetti was to erect forthwith a monument to Qualk. Nelson has his column in Trafalgar-square ; poor dear Bellot his granite obelisk at Greenwich ; Wellington and Peel are sown, in bronze and marble, broadcast over the kingdom ; but where is the statue of Thomas Qualk ? I am ready to subscribe to the Qualk testimonial ; I am prepared to use my influence with the Governors of Christ's Hospital in order to procure a presentation for Qualk's youngest son. I am persuaded that the kind-hearted Duke of Cambridge has the name of Qualk's eldest born down at the Horse Guards for

the very next commission, without purchase. Parliament, I am sure, need only be moved by the accomplished Chancellor of the Exchequer to vote as munificent a grant to Qualk's family as it did to that other benefactor of humanity who invented perforated postage stamps; yet I wait vainly for some symptom of national recognition of the transcendent services of Qualk, to rush down to the *Times* office, and insert an advertisement that the Qualk Committee (with power to add to their number) are now sitting; that the Qualk subscription is opened: and that Messrs. Coutts at the West, and Messrs. Barclay and Bevan at the East end of London, have kindly consented to receive contributions.

There may be some persons obtuse enough to object that they do not know who Thomas Qualk was (for, alas! I must speak of him in the past tense), or what was the precise nature of the services which entitle him to the national gratitude. Be it my pleasing duty to enlighten those who are yet lost in the mazes of ignorance respecting the achievements of this great man; and to demonstrate conclusively the claims which the subject of this paper possesses on the sympathies of a British public. "When kings and ministers are forgotten, when the force and direction of personal"—but no, I need not quote Junius. I trust to show how much the late Qualk the Circumnavigator effected for the benefit of his countrymen, and with what an inadequate requital his efforts have hitherto met.

Thomas Qualk was born—really it is not the slightest good to tell you where my Thomas was born; suffice it to say, that he *was* born, and that he had the ordinary number of grandfathers and grandmothers, with whom marriage within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity was, according to the dictates of the Common Prayer-book, rigidly proscribed. He was educated,—but, dear me! what does it matter where a youth receives his primary rudiments of education? George Stephenson could not read or write at nineteen years of age; Gifford, of the “Quarterly Review,” was a cobbler; Burns whistled at the plough; George Canning boasted that he could *never* do a sum in long division. I suppose—nay, I am certain—that Thomas Qualk must have been educated somewhere; nay, I feel a moral conviction that he was a good boy, stuck to his book, and was much beloved by his master. Great navigators must be good boys. Such, I am sure, were Jason, Marco Polo, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Drake, Christopher Columbus, Sebastian Cabot, La Pérouse, Admiral Benbow, Americus Vespuccius, and Captain Cook.

I am ashamed to say that I am entirely ignorant of the time when the idea of going down to the sea in ships, and circumnavigating the globe, first occurred to Thomas Qualk. I don't know at all when he first began to handle the astrolabe and the quadrant; to “take a sight”—otherwise called an observation—at high noon; to trouble himself about the altitude of the sun and moon; or to



babble his first "nor'-nor'-west by east" upon the shipman's card. It must have been at a very early age, too, that he commenced hitching up his tarry trousers, shivering his timbers, dowsing his glims, and darning his old leescuppers; but, to tell the truth, I have no authentic documents on which to rely. I have had no access to letters bearing on the early life of Qualk. I met with him only in the meridian of prosperity and in the noontide of his fame; and, if you have no objection, I would much rather be excused from dwelling any further on the events of his early days—the subject being one about which I know as much as the Man in the Moon. *Mihi est*, however, to describe Qualk in after-life, and to trumpet forth to the world the great and good things he accomplished for the regeneration of his species, and the greater glory of circumnavigation. Actuated by this desire, I will, if you please, skip some intervening years of Thomas's career; imagine him breeched, launched in life, and on the salt sea waves; assume him to have overcome his first attack of sea-sickness; to have caught his first grampus; to have been rescued from his first shipwreck (for he must have been shipwrecked many times, must Thomas Qualk); and to have budded forth into the full bloom of a circumnavigator. Let me speak of the man as I knew him in the grand climacteric of his renown.

On the 8th of September, eighteen hundred and fifty, the good ship *Chokeabahdar*, teak built, copper bottomed, A 1 at Lloyd's, Brickboole command-

ing, and under engagement to the Honourable Company to sail on the ninth, was lying in the East India Dock. Bombay was the destination of the gallant *Chokeabahdar*. Her teak sides were already groaning with the weight of cargo to be despatched to the realms of burning Ind. Her copper bottom swelled with the weight of bales and packages addressed to the civil and military servants of the Honourable Company. You have seen those packages comfortably drying outside the trunk-maker's shop at the West-end: dark slate-coloured, or oil-skin covered chests, with inscriptions in white paint on their lids, setting forth that they were the property of Chittagong Chillum, Esq., Bombay Civil Service, or Lieutenant Chutnee, 99th Native Infantry. The *Chokeabahdar* was nearly full, not to say choked, with merchandise. Goodness, and the supercargo, only knew how many cases of books, how many boxes full of military uniforms, how many Brinley-Richard fowling-pieces, bachelors' kettles, iron bedsteads, india-rubber goloshes, French bonnets, varnished boots, Sangster's parasols, Mechi's writing-desks, camera-obscuras, stocks of stationery, rolls of flannel, bottles of eau-de-Cologne, hat-boxes, trunks, portmanteaus, sea-chests, bullock-valises, band-boxes, and cocked-hat cases, were stowed away in her spacious hold. She was as full of odds and ends as an old curiosity shop. Her 'tween decks were full, and her cabins were full. Her state-rooms, her cuddy, her berths, and her lockers were all full; and the only wonder was how ever, with

all the vast mass of inanimate matter she had on board, she would find room for the hundred and ten passengers, male and female, who—leaving the crew out of the calculation altogether—were to sail in that good ship from Blackwall to Bombay.

For the *Chokeabahdar* carried not only goods, but passengers—ay, and passengers galore. Don't think that every lieutenant in a native regiment, whose furlough is out; don't think that every civilian, whose sick leave has expired, goes back to Hindostan by the speedy but expensive overland route. One hundred and twenty pounds sterling; this is a sum to be looked at twice ere you part with it; and there are many old Indians, even, who will tell you that they prefer the slow comfortable, easy-going three months and a half passage round the Cape, to the hurry-scurrying, feverish, money-scattering hejira from London to Calais, from Calais to Marseilles, from Marseilles to Alexandria, from Alexandria to Suez, from Suez to Aden, and from Aden to Bombay. A month's incessant railway, steamer, omnibus across the desert, and steamer again, is all very well in its way; but to the placid and contented mind, there is a fund of contemplative enjoyment in a long sea voyage. The ship that with flowing sail "spreads her white bosom to the gale," is to many a far sweeter location than the creaking, groaning, straining steam-vessel. You have time for all sorts of amusements in a long sea voyage. For, experiencing all the multifarious phases of sea-sickness, from the pre-

monitory nausea brought on at the first sight of boiled mutton (very adipose) and caper sauce, to the utter prostration of a five days' gale, when you feel that the service for which you would be most profoundly grateful would be that rendered by the first sailor who would take the trouble to throw you overboard, you have time for that most delightful of sensations, getting well after a severe attack of sea-sickness, and waking up some fine morning with an appetite fit for Fe-fo-fum, pleasurably sniffing the invigorating sea-breeze, finding your sea-legs, dressing for the poop, going to see the hammocks stowed, smoking a cheroot forward, discoursing with the boatswain on nautical matters, and positively taking an interest in the number of knots the ship makes per hour. You have time for flirtation, for gambling, for getting up private theatricals, for quarrelling with the occupant of the next state-room, and challenging him to mortal combat, if needs be; for conning the introductory pages of Hamilton Moore, and fancying that you are studying navigation; for writing a novel, or an epic poem, or sonnets on the sea-gulls, or taking a sketch of the equinoctial line, if your imagination be brilliant enough to enable you to see it. In short, there is scarcely anything but what you can do at sea—from playing at chess to bird-stuffing, from baiting fish hooks to solving mathematical problems, from inditing squibs against the unpopular passengers, to stirring up a mutiny against the captain.



The good ship *Chokeabahdar* had got her cargo in, and was ready to fulfil her engagements not only to the Honourable Company, but also to the ladies and gentlemen who had taken and paid for their passage to Bombay, at the office of the brokers, Messrs. Loot and Cowrie, of Great Saint Helen's. On this instant 8th, the environage of the *Chokeabahdar* was encumbered with passengers' luggage and personal effects, and the passengers themselves were pottering about the decks and cabins of the ship, driving the mates to the verge of desperation with irrelevant questions, getting into the way of sailors, opening all the lockers in the cuddy, grumbling about the accommodation of the state-rooms—though each had chosen one for himself on the printed plan in the agents' counting-house—superintending the lowering of those chests and trunks which were marked "not wanted on the voyage" into the hold, and complaining bitterly that sufficient care was not taken in saving the corners of the boxes from being knocked against the coombings of the hatchways. The first mate, Mr. Drybone, was highly exasperated against the passengers generally, and made several very uncomplimentary remarks concerning them to Mr. Tuffknot, the boatswain; and it was well for these rebellious ones that Captain Brickboole was not aboard, for a stern man was that commander, and one who stood no nonsense. If a passenger—were he gentle or simple—showed himself insubordinate to Captain Brickboole's sway during a voyage, him straightway

did the determined shipmaster clap in irons. "I'd serve him so," Captain Brickboole was wont to say, "if he was a member of Council; that I would." But though severe, Captain Brickboole was a humane man, and tempered justice with courtesy. He had never been known to put a passenger in irons without apologising to him, on releasing him, in the frankest and most gentlemanly manner, and his fetters were always—with a tender regard to the wrists and ankles of his captives—covered with green baize.

There was quite an imposing list of passengers on the present occasion. Lieutenant-General Pancreas, Bombay army, going back after his two years' furlough, part of which he had spent at Pau, in the Pyrenees, and part at Cheltenham. Neither sanitary sojourn appeared to have done General Pancreas's *viscera* much good; or his complexion, or his temper either, to tell truth. He was an ill-conditioned old curmudgeon, who devoured prodigious quantities of curry, pepperpot, chillum, cutlets, capsicum-hash, and mulligatawny soup, took large quantities of abominably pungent Amsterdam snuff, wore a suit of nankeen throughout the year (with woollen beneath it in winter, as Duke Arthur used to wear flannel beneath his white ducks), which nankeen was nearly as yellow as his face, drank deep potations of sangaree, and grumbled incessantly.

He was the most important in rank among the passengers, and, at the cuddy banquets, sat on the

right hand of Captain Brickboole. Next to him in social status was Mr. Poppyhead, Bengal Civil Service. He was collector at Muddlepore, and was a very harmless, languid, sleepy-headed gentleman, who never seemed so happy as when he was in a dressing jacket and slippers, his body semi-recumbent in one chair, and his feet in another, with his eyes closed, and a very long Trinchinopoly cheroot in his mouth. Mr. Poppyhead was reported in well-informed Anglo-Indian circles to be worth several lacs of rupees, but he always asserted that he was exceedingly poor, and gave out that he returned to India by the long sea route for economy's sake alone. Economy, too, had something to do with the choice made by Mr. McShard, M.R.C.S., and surgeon of the 91st B.N.I., who stoutly declared that his pay didn't keep him in surgical instruments. He also was a passenger per *Chokeabahdar*; and with him was Mrs. McShard—a species of Anglo-Bengal Helen McGregor, and the Misses McShard, two young ladies of middle age, and of such angular proportions, that they might have passed for Euclid's Elements in petticoats—who had been setting their ringlets for ever so many years at snug-salaried members of the Civil Service; but failing to create an excitement in the perhaps jaundiced bosoms of those covenanted servants of the Hon. Company, were now fain to exercise their blandishments upon Messrs. Griffin and Tiffin, raw-seef-faced lads of seventeen, who were making their first voyage to Hindostan as cadets, and were by

their respective parents specially recommended to the care of Mr. McShard. Griffin was the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Griffin, H.E.I.C.S.,\* and sometime Political agent at Guzzlebad; and Tiffin was the nephew of the well-known and wealthy Biffin, the great opium merchant and East India Director; and neither were matches to be lightly regarded, as you may imagine. I really have little more space to describe the remaining passengers of the *Chokeabahdar*; yet I must sacrifice a line or two, in order that all may know that Mr. and Mrs. Kobbatt, the indigo planters of Bloorut, were among the list; that the charming Miss Roguey was there, going out to join her papa, Colonel Roguey, commanding the Pogueypore Contingent; that the gallant Captain Pyggesbycker, of the Shazaderugger Irregulars, had also joined the band, professedly because he abhorred steam navigation; but, in reality, I am afraid, because he had lost rather heavily lately at the pleasing game of lansquenet, as carried on at the Hydrocephalus Club, in St. James's-street, and found round the Cape, in comparison to *viâ* Marseilles, a very considerable saving. And I should be guilty of a very great dereliction against the laws of gallantry, were I to omit the name of Mrs. Vandegabbleschroy, that estimable widow lady, of the rubicund countenance, the affable manners, the convivial habits, and the vast circumference of person, who was, and is still, I hope,

\* This story was written before the sponging out of the Honourable East India Company, peace to its jaundiced manes.



known to all Anglo-Indians as the worthy principal of the Bundlepunt Institution for the education of young ladies, Calcutta. Honest Mrs. Vandegabbleschroy ! no typhoons, monsoons, droughts, nor rainy seasons ; not a thirty years' sojourn in the scorching East ; not all the cares of a flourishing boarding-school, with its inevitable occasional *contretemps* of bankrupt scholars, whose parents had been mofusilising in an inordinate degree, had been able to diminish her appetite for substantial viands, or her thirst for Hodgson's pale ale, had taken one dimple from her jolly face, had popped one acrid curd, one drop of sour whey, into the milk of human kindness with which she abounded. Mrs. Vandegabbleschroy was the female Daniel Lambert of Bengal ; but she was the best tempered woman, the heartiest feeder, and the most excellent schoolmistress, of the three presidencies.

The portentous morrow at length dawned on which the *Chokeabahdar* was to sail. There had been great leave-takings and farewell jollifications among the passengers. Some had dined on the eve of departure at the Artichoke, at Blackwall, and had found the fare there so good, that they had been persuaded to occupy beds at that comfortable hostelry for the night. General Pancreas and Mr. Poppyhead had business to settle at the India House, and were to join the ship at Gravesend. Griffin and Tiffin came down in a Hansom cab from the Bath Hotel, in Piccadilly, where they had been stopping with Tiffin's uncle, Biffin. Mr. McShard,

his wife, and daughters, had prudently saved the expense of a night's extra stay in London, and had slept on board the *Chokeabahdar*. The other passengers dropped down to Blackwall by various conveyances; Mrs. Vandegabbleschroy arriving by a Woolwich steamboat, the whole of whose passengers and crew — down to the very call-boy, she had delighted with her amenity and good temper during the short voyage. She consumed two pints of bottled stout between Essex Pier and Rotherhithe, and insisted on the Captain hobnobbing with her. It was with difficulty that the crew could be dissuaded from saluting her with three cheers when she landed. They characterized her by the name of "Brick." Captain Brickboole joined the gallant ship at about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. He had had a large amount of business to get through on the foregoing evening; notably a dinner given him at the Ship and Turtle, in Leadenhall-street, of which he was good enough to say afterwards that the iced punch was first chop, but the turtle was poor stuff, after terrapin.

The *Chokeabahdar* was to sail at noon; and at twenty minutes past eleven there entered the dockyard a gentleman whose name was down in the passenger-list, whose berth was taken, whose passage was paid, and whose voluminous luggage, or rather merchandise—so many cases and packages were there that bore his name as "passenger to Point de Galle, Ceylon; with care"—had been duly stowed away in the hold three days before.

This gentleman, on his arrival, carried only a small carpet-bag and a slim umbrella in a shiny case. He was not a very remarkable gentleman to look at : of middle age, cleanly shaven, slightly inclined to corpulence, with a clear blue eye, and placid smile about his mouth, whose somewhat full lips offered physiognomical evidence that he was not altogether averse to the pleasures of the table, with a closely-cropped head of black hair, in which, beneath his travelling-cap, a thread of silver might here and there be discovered. He was clad in a neat travelling suit of gray plaid. This middle-aged individual might have been a medical gentleman, a commercial gentleman, a gentleman retired from business, a major in a marching regiment, or a Manchester warehouseman. He paid the cabman who brought him to the dockyard gates very liberally ; and when he gave him an extra shilling to drink his health withal, advised him, in a friendly manner, to take a biscuit and cheese with his potatoes, whatever they might be ! "Always take care of your digestion, my man," he said, cheerfully, on parting ; "the coats of the stomach are *so* easily injured." The cabman touched his hat, and drove off, staring at his good-humoured face over his shoulder. But I am afraid that when the hour of refreshment arrived (and I should like to know what are the hours of refreshment of London cabmen), he substituted the fumes of bird's-eye tobacco, inhaled through the tube of a clay pipe, for the biscuit and cheese recommended to him.

by the cleanly-shaven gentleman in the travelling-cap.

The passenger per *Chokeabahdar* picked his way daintily through the crowded dockyard, as though he was accustomed to the ways of places of maritime resort; avoided, by singular good luck, falling into the basin, entangling his legs in a cable, and tripping himself up therewith, or running foul of a dock porter laden with sacks. The second mate of the *Chokeabahdar*, who was standing at the gangway, seemed to recognise him as he approached, and touched his gold-laced cap with a kindly aspect, as he stepped on board.

"Good morning, Mr. Qualk," he said; "punctual as usual, I see!"

"As punctual, my good friend Dedlights," responded the passenger addressed as Qualk—and, indeed, there is no use in disguising it, this was Thomas Qualk, the Circumnavigator, himself,—“as when, four years since I came on board the *Chokeabahdar* in the Hooghly. Neither of us have grown younger since then, Mr. Dedlights.” With which sententious but sage remark, Thomas Qualk amiably pressed half-a-dozen of the best Havannah cigars into the mate's hand, and went down below into his state-room.

"Very well the old gent looks," Mr. Binnacle, third in command, remarked to Mr. Dedlights.

"Fresh as paint," his superior officer rejoined, approvingly testing the cigars by means of his organs of taste and smell. "Lively as a man-a-war's



cat when the grog's spilt. I wonder what the old boy's going to India for this time? Real Cabans these, and no mistake. He gave me a hubble-bubble, with an amber mouth-piece, last time he joined the *Chokeabahdar*."

He was always giving away something to somebody, Thomas Qualk. There never was surely such a generous-hearted creature. He made presents (mostly administrative to creature comfort) to the passengers, the officers, the crew, down to the little cabin-boys who swabbed the decks. We have seen how liberal he was to the cabman. He was known all over the sea-faring world: for, an assiduous traveller for years, he had twice accomplished the great feat of circumnavigating the globe; and this present Indian journey was understood to be but the preliminary to his third trip to the antipodes. The officers of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company knew him well. He was familiar with all the steamers on the Southampton, Spanish Main, and West India lines; the stewards of the Cunard and the Collins's American packets rivalled each other in showing him attention; and the captains of the Australian emigrant ships (the "Black Ball" and "Red Jacket" fleets of antipodean clip-pers did not exist as yet) knew and respected him. The landlord of the Victoria Hotel, at Cape Town, swore by him; at Port Royal, Jamaica, he had four invitations to dinner every day he remained in harbour; the black waiters at the St. Boblink, Aster House, New York, grinned with delight

when he ascended the marble steps of that establishment; and it was even whispered that at the wrecking, filibustering, semi-piratical haven of Key West, Thomas Qualk enjoyed an enviable popularity. Old acquaintances used to joke him about Cape Horn and Terra del Fuego, and accuse him of being on familiar terms with the fair Patagonians: but this Thomas always denied, acknowledging, however, to having once experienced a tender feeling for an olive-skinned damsel residing in the island of Otaheite. And yet no one knew the motive of Thomas Qualk's continual journeyings to and fro over the seas. When questioned on the subject, he turned off inquiry with a laugh, stating that he travelled for the same reason as that assigned by Ben Jonson for drinking so much Canary sack—*i.e.* "because he liked it;" but he never grew angry; and when hard pressed, nodded his head with sly mystery, and said that the world would know all about it some day. Whence it became bruited about, that Qualk the Circumnavigator, emulous of the fame of Malte Brun, was about to edit another atlas; or was determined to rival Mercator by the production of another chart which should throw that hitherto celebrated geographical projection into the shade. One thing, however, seemed certain, that Thomas must be very rich: for, beyond the money which his incessant voyages necessarily cost, he was most lavish in his personal expenditure. Had he travelled under French colours, or among Frenchmen, little curiosity would have been excited concerning his

movements and character. The easily satisfied sons of Gaul would have put him down at once as an eccentric child of Albion, a milord, afflicted with the "spleen," and temporarily tired of "boule-dogues," raw beef-steaks, brandy-grog, and the "boxe," and spending his vast revenues in a pertinacious pursuit of marine adventures.

"'Twas post meridian, half-past four"—to borrow the exordium of Tom Dibdin's charming song, when, next day, the *Chokeabahdar* was tugged out of the East India Dock, and bidding a long farewell—not to "Nancy," but to the Isle of Dogs—floated majestically down the broad river. Cheers rang out around her as she threaded her way through the dense forest of shipping. Thousands of good wishes went after her; as after many and many as good and as brave a ship which has left Old England's shores under auspices as favourable, but which, alas! has come to grief—burnt, perchance, to the water's edge, in the midst of a silent sky and a silent ocean, illumined for miles round by the red glare of her destruction; or dashed to pieces in a howling storm, by impetuous waves, or swallowed up alive by the inexorable deep: the secret of its dreadful end never to be known till the sea gives up its dead.

No such terrible catastrophe was to befall, this voyage at least, the *Chokeabahdar*; but still she had anything but a prosperous time. All went well until she had passed the Cape; but then ill luck seemed to set in upon her. She experienced a succession of

violent gales; her hencoops were washed overboard; her sheep and pigs were drowned; her solitary cow refused to give any more milk, and shortly afterwards gave up, not only the dairy-line business, but the ghost altogether. The carpenter was not at all easy in his mind about the timbers of the *Chokeabahdar*, and reported her leaky; the boatswain had misgivings; the second mate looked dark and ominous; and even Captain Brickboole lost his wonted gaiety; forebore to make his wonted jokes at the cuddy table, and became moody and taciturn; All went wrong on board the gallant Indiaman. The crew grumbled and worked unwillingly; the passengers, tired out with the length of the voyage, and the violence of the weather, grew testy and ill-tempered, and quarrelled with one another vengefully. To bring things to the worst, when the *Chokeabahdar* had been four months at sea, and when the stock of sea luxuries had long been exhausted, it began to be noised about that the ordinary ship's provisions were running low, and that soon not only would there be no more soft bread and fresh beef, but there would also be a deficiency of salt junk, biscuit, and rum.

It was under these untoward circumstances that Thomas Qualk, the Circumnavigator, shone forth in all the brightness of his exceptionally effulgent character. As the stock of provisions grew low, so did Thomas's spirits rise; and on the very day when the captain expressed his heartfelt sorrow in being compelled to put the cuddy passengers upon



half rations, Thomas Qualk announced his intention of breaking bulk among the cases and packages in the hold bearing his address ; and among which he hinted, with a placid smile, "some odds and ends might turn up, which would come handy, by way of a relish, to the general short commons." Handy ! odds and ends, indeed : the cuddy of the *Chokeabahdar*, which had a few days since presented only a beggarly account of empty soup tureens, became suddenly metamorphosed into a land of milk and honey—of milk and honey literally as well as figuratively—for, from the magical cases and packages of Thomas Qualk were dispensed lacteal streams, innocent of the presence of the "cow with the iron tail," and mellifluous treasures of the genuine Narbonne flavour. These were the very least of Thomas Qualk's odds and ends. He seemed to have entered into a solemn league and covenant with the cook of the *Chokeabahdar* ; and day after day the table groaned—rejoiced would be, perhaps, the more appropriate word—with delicacies which could not be termed of the season, for they were clearly out of season, but delicacies which were of all seasons, magnificent, luxurious, and succulent. Only imagine always hungry Mrs. Vandegableschroy, imagine Griffin and Tiffin, imagine General Pancreas, imagine the great body of passengers, deprived for weeks of the luxuries, and almost of the necessaries of life, and now suddenly regaled with salmon cutlets, turtle soup, stewed kidneys, minced veal, Strasburg pâté, red mullet, juggd

hare, lobster salad, Welsh mutton, hashed venison, green peas, asparagus, sea-kale, gooseberry tart, calf's foot jelly, and ice-creams. And these formed but a tithe of the good things which the beneficent Qualk dispensed to all and sundry. He produced bins of wine, rich and rare—Champagne, Sillery, Lafitte, Pommard, Clos-Vougeot, and Saint Pérray *mousseux*. From quaintly-formed flasks he poured forth captivating liquors, that flowed in oleaginous gurgles, sparkled like gems, and tasted of Paradise: Curagoa, Maraschino, Chartreuse, Noyau, and Parfait Amour. In hospitable raillery, he asked his guests if they would like a course of game. As jokingly they answered that they should, wishing, internally, very much that they might get it. The next day, the dinner's bill of fare included ortolans, beccaficos, quails, grouse, woodcocks, partridges, *rôtis en papilote*, and pheasants, which were brought to table with their tails on. The cuddy breakfasts became henceforth as sumptuous as the dinners. Meat teas became prevalent, too, as also judicious little hot suppers, at which smoking tit-bits were served up, and incandescent drinks, that smelt of spices, cunningly compounded by the inexhaustible Qualk by way of night-caps. Inexhaustible by no means is an exaggerated epithet, for, as if to surpass all his former efforts, the indomitable benefactor took to providing every lady passenger, at breakfast time, with a bouquet of fresh roses, that were redolent of delicious perfume and prairie dew, and providing on the sideboard a miniature Eau-

de-Cologne fountain, for his fair fellow-travellers to dip their pocket-handkerchiefs in.

Nor did his generosity stop here. He sent great bowls of savoury soup forward to the crew, and on Sunday delighted the old fore-castle by the gift of a mighty plum-pudding. They had not tasted "duff" for thirty-one days, and Thomas Qualk was cheered the next time he appeared on the poop. The most wonderful and contradictory rumours began to spread about the culinary Mecenas. He was a lord, an earl, a royal duke, the Governor-General of India. The ship belonged to him. Captain Brickboole dared not say that black was the white of his eye. The whole cargo of the *Chokeabahdar* was composed of victuals and drink. Why should they have been kept so long on half-rations and three-water grog? And then they began to grumble.

To grumble with so little show of reason, inasmuch as, with all the high living on board, the *Chokeabahdar* made no way. She had been out one hundred and fifty days, and still she tossed about, a crippled, creaking tub, far, far away from her destination. Would she ever see India's burning shores? The winds and waves seemed to have a spite against her, buffeting and hustling her about the infirm highway, till her overstrained timbers shrieked with agony, and her tallest masts crouched like hounds that are beaten. The carpenter, always inclined to croak, became doubly boding about that leak which had for months

weighed heavy on his mind ; and suggested that well-thrummed sails should be put under the ship's keel. The boatswain, a crusty customer at the best of times, became a perfect bear, growling rather than whistling his commands to his satellites ; the mates whispered grim disparagements of things in general among themselves ; and Captain Brickboole, from a rigid, but just and temperate commander, transformed himself into a nautical Nero, teasing his mates, bullying his men, biting (metaphorically) his passengers' noses off, and making his apprentices wish that they had never been born.

Gradually, and curiously enough, an inexplicable revulsion of feeling began to set in against Qualk. His fellow-passengers looked askance at him. Even the benignant Mrs. Vandegabbleschroy frowned upon him while she devoured his dainties ; and the Misses McShard turned up their already-sufficiently turned-up noses still further when he passed them on the poop. Among the crew, superstitious terrors began to be mingled with dislike of the in-offending circumnavigator. Grim and unearthly accusations were laid at his door, by a nautical *Vehmgericht* that met round the galley-fires or in the bunks of the forecastle. He was a wizard, a sorcerer, one of mother Carey's chickens, Davy Jones, nay, the terrible Flying Dutchman himself. One discontented spirit suggested that he was a spy. A spy over what ? The whales ? The officers tried to stem the tide of Thomas Qualk's unpopularity, loud and as far as they could ; but even they



were compelled to acknowledge that he was a "curious customer," and reminded each other of the bad weather they had experienced, four years previously, when Thomas had been a passenger on board the *Chokeabahdar*. Captain Brickboole had nothing to say against Mr. Qualk, certainly—how should he, indeed? nobody had anything to say against him; yet still he chafed and fretted at Qualk's tacit superiority to the disagreeable position of affairs, and said that he did not like Mr. Qualk's way of carrying on, and wanted to know very much whether he, Captain Brickboole, was captain of his own ship or not? Who else could be captain? Not Thomas Qualk, certainly. In short, the hero of this brief biographical sketch became a very Jonah to the crew of the *Chokeabahdar*; and if it had not so providentially happened that, after a passage of almost unexampled danger and duration, the good ship arrived safely at her journey's end, it is more than probable that Thomas Qualk might have been thrown into the Indian Ocean, by a crew blinded by ignorance, prejudice, and superstition, to take his chance of being spitted on a coral reef, or swallowed by the first big fish that happened to pass that way. But Thomas escaped the fate of Jonah, to receive an ovation at Bombay, where he landed. The wrath of the passengers and seamen against him changed—such is the inconsistency of human nature—into affectionate and admiring penitence; a deputation aft, and a deputation forward, entreated his forgiveness. And when

he descended the ship's side into the boat that was to convey him to the shore, three such ringing cheers echoed along the decks of the *Chokeabahdar* as had not been heard since the arrival of the Governor at the Presidency. Captain Brickboole nearly wrung his hand off as he left the gangway, so forcible was the fervour of his parting salutation ; and he remarked afterwards, in confidence to Mr. Dedlights, that if ever there existed a man from Limehouse to Labuan who " had no nonsense about him, that man was Thomas Qualk !"

The circumnavigator did not remain long at Bombay. He left in a country ship for Singapore, whence he dropped in at Hong-kong. Thence he departed in an American clipper for Australia, looking in at Honolulu in his way, and at Port Philip took shipping again for England, arriving in Falmouth Roads some time during the year eighteen hundred and fifty-two. All his fellow-passengers, all the captains, and all the crews with whom he sailed, had but one story to tell of him—the narrative of his unbounded liberality, of his apparently inexhaustible stock of land-faring and sea-faring delicacies. He had quelled a mutiny of Chinese emigrants, between China and Australia, by the distribution of rations of curried rice ; he had tranquillized four hundred and twenty discontented Kroomen by an impromptu banquet of baked sucking-pig. Everywhere, always, he had been the same : a perpetual fount of good things to eat and drink—an inexhaustible milch cow.

In the spring of eighteen hundred and fifty-three, Thomas Qualk once more left England, and with more packing-cases than ever. He sailed from the port of Grimsby, in a whaler called the *Young Porpoise*, Captain Lamplugh. Once more was Thomas bound on a voyage of circumnavigation, proposing to select the Russian possessions in North America as his starting point; but from the twenty-second of April, eighteen hundred and fifty-three, to the 1st of August, 1854, not a line reached the relatives of the crew of the *Young Porpoise* at Grimsby, not a soul could tell what had become of her, her equipage, or the adventurous circumnavigator who was her sole passenger. Anxiety quickened into alarm, alarm into terror, terror into a firm persuasion that the *Young Porpoise* would never come back.

At length the captain of a Hull whaler which came home "clean," which is more, says Smell-fungus, "than I ever saw a Hull whaler go out," was enabled to solve this dreadful mystery. The narrative, on oath, was given before the mayor of Hull, and several influential gentlemen connected with the county and borough magistracy, and the corporation of the town. It was published at length in the "Hull Packet," and was *not* published in the "Hull Courier," which (the "Courier" being at the time in opposition to the municipality) is an additional confirmation of the authenticity of the statement. Several credible witnesses, frequenting the coffee room of the Victoria Hotel, heard on various occasions the narrative in question from Captain

Sealyskin's (of the *Blubberous*) own mouth; and the original document was itself preserved among the municipal archives at the Town Hall, where it remains to this day, to witness if I lie.

It appears that Captain Sealyskin's vessel, the *Blubberous*, having been in the course of the previous winter securely locked in the ice in a certain bight or inlet on the coast of Greenland, the captain with a few of his men, to beguile the monotony of their arctic captivity, started on an expedition to shoot walruses. That, behind a range of gigantic icebergs, they had come upon a sailing vessel, bearing on her stern the fatal inscription "*Young Porpoise, Grimsby.*" The *Young Porpoise* had also been locked in the ice, but, alas! no genial thaw had relieved her from her stern imprisonment, and to all appearance she had been frozen up for months. The captain and his men boarded the vessel; but though they found about half her complement of hands on board, all those hands, alas! were locked in the icy clutch of death. Nothing but a row of frozen corpses, preserved in an unnatural state of freshness, met the frightened gaze of the fur-clad seamen of the *Blubberous*. Stay! there was a stranger spectacle. The deck was strewn with empty packages, empty cases, empty cannisters, empty sardine tins, empty pie-dishes, empty jam-pots, and empty champagne-bottles. But no vestige of anything, solid or liquid, that was fit for human sustenance, could they find on board. Descending to the captain's cabin, they found the frozen body of a



bushy-whiskered man in a pilot jacket, stretched on one of the lockers, and whom they conjectured to be Captain Lamplugh, of the *Young Porpoise*. On the table lay the log-book, with the last entry made in it by its commander: "Provisions and water all gone. Exploring party in search of aid or walruses, away seventeen days. Temperature ninety-nine below zero. Mr. Qualk taken ill this morning. . . ." Fired at seeing the mention of that honoured name, though still shuddering at the sad sight they had witnessed, the seamen of the *Blubberous* rushed into the adjacent cabin, and there, peacefully reclining in an arm-chair, a well-covered sheet of manuscript on the table before him, a pen yet adhering to his stiffened fingers, they found, frozen to death, the form of him who once had been Thomas Qualk.

These were the last words of Thomas Qualk, found inscribed in legible characters on the scroll to which I have alluded :—

"Ship *Young Porpoise*, in the ice, January 14, 1854.

"I am dying—dying of cold and starvation ; but before I die I wish this statement to be made, that it may go forth in vindication of my character and in furtherance of the objects to which I have sacrificed my time, my talents, and, at last, my life. I wish it to be known to the uttermost corners of the earth that *the patent preserved provisions—meat, vegetables, fruit, pastry, &c.*—of Messrs. Hodgson, Podgson, and Dodgson, of Bucklersbury, London,

for whose respectable firm I have been for years the chief commercial traveller, are capable (in hermetically-sealed tins) of resisting the effects of any climate; and that they have so resisted the action of the extremes of torrid and gelid temperature. The subjoined testimonials, signed by very many commanders and officers of her Majesty's and the merchant service, and by hundreds of persons of rank and respectability with whom I have had the honour of travelling, will abundantly and additionally testify to the merits of the patent preserved provisions (in hermetically-sealed tins) of Messrs. Hodgson, Podgson, and Dodgson. *Dulce et decorum est pro—*"

But here the manuscript broke off.

Let us honour and revere the memory of Thomas Qualk, even as we do that of the unknown benefactors of humanity who invented red herrings and pickled salmon.

## The Murderous Ischbostchik.

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You will imagine, if you please, that this is the very depth of winter in St. Petersburg, and that the following incidents occurred during the reign of the late Emperor Nicholas. Everything is frozen : water, milk, wine, brandy, meat, poultry, game, and fish, the tears in the eyes, the breath in the nostrils, the words (excuse the hyperbole) on the lips. The sentinels take only twenty-five minute turns on guard, and are mildly warned that they will be "warmed" to the extent of five hundred blows with a stick, if they go to sleep ; for to sleep in the cold is death. Wherever balls are given, wherever the theatres are open, before the palaces and before the great hotels, there are huge circular furnaces, with an iron cupola above, supported on pillars, round which the coachmen and droschky-drivers gather to warm themselves : otherwise they would be frozen on their boxes. Droschkies drive down the Neva to Cronstadt, and the carriage-roads on the frozen river are bordered with evergreens. The bridges are taken away and laid up in ordinary. The statues in the Summer Garden are swathed in haybands for fear their marble noses and toes should be frostbitten. You no longer see human

beings in the street: you see instead huge balls made up of fur pelisses, waddling through the snow, and through whose folds you can discern neither sex nor age. Ivan the moujik has only his sheep-skin *touloupe*; but he has turned the woolly side in, and is warm. The wild beasts in the great forests in the government of St. Petersburg are beginning to have bad times of it. Several bears have ventured into the very suburbs of the city, and have been shot therein, preferring a warm bellyful of powder and ball to sucking their paws in the bitter cold; and an old wolf who lives on the outskirts of some marshes in Finland has been heard to remark to his nephew that he does not remember so hard a winter since the invasion of 1812.

There is a grand masked ball to-night at the Bolschoi Theatre. We have paid our five roubles for a ticket; let us bid our droschky-driver wait, bestowing on him a fifty-copeck piece to refresh himself with "vodka," while we join in the mazy dance, leave our sable pelisse (if we are wealthy enough to possess one) in the *vestiaire*, don a plain black domino and a mask, and allow yon thoughtful-looking servant in the imperial livery to conduct us into the *salle de danse*. Soh! we are in the thick of it.

Wondrous thing for Russia, we do not catch a glimpse of one single military uniform in the whole brilliant theatre. Where are the plumed casques, the gleaming epaulettes and aiguillettes, the em-



broidered tunics, the dazzling gauntlets and bufferies? They must be somewhere here, and as we thread our way through the throng we seem to hear, from time to time, the clank of a pair of spurs and the clatter of a sabretasche, unmistakeably denoting that beneath some of these dominos are concealed generals, adjutants and *aides-de-camp de l'Empereur*. There is a mass of masquers in fancy dresses, not the faded trumpery to which you have been accustomed in England and France, but glittering apparel—rich silks and velvets show their sheen, lace and embroidery dazzle you. But it is not among the giddy crowds of waltzers and dancers of schottisches and polkas that we seek the real *delices* of the evening. We are in quest of mystery, of occult intrigues, of puzzling equivoques, of inscrutable *quid pro quos*, and, if we will seek diligently and observantly for them, we shall be able to reap a rich harvest wherewith to satisfy our curiosity.

Ever flitting, and glimmering, and pullulating among the votaries of Terpsichore (oh! thrice-hackneyed phrase) like will-o'-the-wisps, are these dominos. Pink dominos, cherry-coloured dominos, amber satin dominos, cream-coloured dominos, black dominos, and these last in far greater profusion than those of gayer hues. Grand disguises are these dominos—ample shrouds that veil the mysteries of love or hatred, or more harmless wit and mirth. Only now and then the little foot, peeping timorously, mouse-like, from beneath the heavy drapery,

or a breath of hot wind stirring the black lace vallance of the mask, and disclosing a white rounded chin beneath, will tell the secret that the wearer belongs to the softer sex. These dominos speak in no shrill, discordant gibberish, as do their *effrontée* sisters in Paris or London. They whisper discreet calumnies in your ear; they stab you silently with keen little daggers of witty inuendo; they bid you pluck a roseleaf from a bouquet, and straightway you are aware that the secret of your heart of hearts is known to some one. Tiny gloved hands come from these domino folds, slip little billets into your waistcoat pocket, and disappear behind the jealous curtain. Rendezvous are made, reconciliations effected, the preliminaries of duels settled, vows of passionate love exchanged, all in a noiseless *chuchottement*. The whole scene is one huge Haarlem organ of secretiveness, but with the *vox humana* stop on.

Stalking majestically through the dense mass of mystifiers and mystified, is a tall, stately, stalwart figure, draped from head to foot in a black domino and closed mask. If you happen to have a friend in the ball-room, ten to one that he will clutch your arm, and murmur, in a half-amused, half-terrified whisper: "*Chut!* that is the Czar! His Majesty is amusing himself. Let us get out of his way." But if you stroll behind the orchestra, where masquers are sipping lemonade and eating ices (for the heat of the crowd and the stoves renders both most acceptable luxuries), it is far from improbable

that you will meet another tall, stalwart figure, accoutred in a precisely similar manner, and stalking along as stately (albeit he may have a saucy little black satin domino on his arm) as his prototype in the ball-room. And again, ten chances to one, if you ramble into the brilliant *foyer*, you will find tall black domino number three, lounging on one of the crimson velvet-covered settees. Go farther yet into the great refreshment saloon, tall black domino number four is seated at a marble table, treating an amber-satin domino to champagne and macaroon. Farther, and still farther, right up into the top tier of boxes, and leaning over the balcony, moodily contemplating the mad scene of gaiety beneath, is tall black domino number five.

"*Decidement*," says Mademoiselle Amenaïde Zizine, of the Imperial French Theatre, a charming *soubrette*, famous for the ease and impudence with which she "chaffs" the Emperor at masquerades—"Decidement," says Mademoiselle Amenaïde (in cherry-coloured silk) to Lolotte, her *camarade* and *premier sujet* of the *corps de ballet*, "*le père Nicholas* will not be here to-night. I have spoken to at least half-a-dozen tall black dominos (*des monstres, ma chère*), and they have answered me in Russ. As if anybody ever understood Russ—*cette chienne de langue*."

"But perhaps the Emperor wouldn't speak French, and answered you in Russ to mystify you, *pour l'intriguer, ma mie*."

"*Tiens!* Can he speak Russ, the Père Nicholas?"

exclaims Mademoiselle Amenaïde, in great wonderment. "I thought he could only speak French, the Emperor. But there's General Gueldanoff—I know the old wretch by his limp—I'll go and say something to make him smart." And off trips Mademoiselle Amenaïde Zizine of the Imperial French Theatre.

Now, the initiated in the ways of the Winter Palace and the secrets of the back stairs, know that the Emperor has occasionally found his colossal form, dominoed as it might have been, too easily recognisable at masquerades; and that immediate recognition has occasionally interfered with the Imperial schemes of nocturnal amusement. To obviate this annoying *contretemps*, his Majesty has hit upon the notable device of choosing among his aides-de-camp certain noble Russians of his exact height, and of a gait and bearing resembling his own as closely as possible, who are instructed to perambulate the ball-room, and to speak French or Russ when addressed, as the Imperial whim may dictate, or as the furtherance of the Imperial plans may render necessary. Sometimes, indeed, when the stock of tall aides-de-camp has run short, the Autocrat has been compelled to resort to the ranks of his faithful regiment of Préobajinski Guards, and to select, from the biggest and handsomest of the grenadier company, a duplicate Romanoff or two. The importance of thus having six Imperial Richmonds or Romanoffs in the field instead of one must be visible to the meanest comprehension; and



those versed in such matters say that the Préobajinski Richmonds were, in the long run, found to be the most serviceable; for those honest fellows, being well supplied with rouble notes to comfort themselves with punch *à la Romaine* withal, and being totally unused to such a scene of splendour, could only utter, when spoken to, guttural exclamations of astonishment in their native Slavonic; whereas the aides-de-camp were sometimes treacherous enough to pass themselves off for the veritable Emperor, and to poach upon the Imperial domains in the most shameless manner.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the tall black dominos are the only sons of Anak in these halls of dazzling light. The Russians, gentle and simple (save the *maloi Ruski*, or little Russians), run large; and there are scores of stalwart forms here to-night, both in black and parti-coloured dominos, and in fancy dresses. See, here is one, a fine-looking fellow too, six feet and more in his shoes, dressed—saints in heaven who sing, assoiffiez us!—like the Enemy of mankind. He wears a dreadful mask with red flaming eyes, and a pair of formidable horns. He has a shiny-sealy body, claws, and an admirably-constructed cloven foot, a tail of immoderate dimensions, and *such* a pitchfork. As he swaggers along, brandishing that terror to sinners, the masquers give way before him, crying out "*Gospodin Tchort! Gospodin Tchort!*" (Lord Lucifer!) I am afraid that in France or England this diabolical costume would not be admissible,

and would be equally tabooed with those of clown, harlequin, and pantaloon; but in Russia the arch-fiend is an institution. He is the real old theologic-Gothic Lucifer, with horns, with hoofs, and a tail, who flew away with King Arthur's tailor, and tempted St. Anthony, and was beaten by Banagher, and had his nose tweaked by St. Dunstan. The Russians have a great respect, and a terror not unmixed with humour, for him. They look on him with a sort of grotesque fear, and call him Lord. And, indeed, it has been known for some centuries that "the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman."

Gospodin Lucifer, then (we won't call him by his plainest name, for fear of wounding the susceptibilities of our younger readers, who are not yet quite emancipated from the fear of "Bogey"), goes roaring about, cracking pandemoniacal jokes to those around him, squeezing the prettiest of the *débardeurs*, who, laughing, take him by the horns and shake him; and occasionally proguing a male domino with his pitchfork, who turns round and asks him, angrily, what he means. But he is a very good-tempered fiend, is Gospodin Tchort, and is highly popular among the ladies. He treats half-a-dozen of them to an expensive supper in the grand refreshment saloon, refusing, however, to take off his mask, and consuming prodigious quantities of champagne through the pasteboard lips thereof. He speaks only Russ, with a strong German accent: and the word goes forth that Gospodin Tchort is an eccentric Livonian nobleman. Mademoiselle Ame-

naïde Zizine is good enough at a later period of the evening to engage him in conversation, and he whispers one little word in the ear of her black velvet mask—whether in German-Russ, or not, I am not informed; but it is certain that half-an-hour afterwards, Mademoiselle Amenaïde, meeting Lolotte (who is on the very best terms by this time with a young Circassian officer of the Czar's Mahometan escort), tells her in confidence that the good-tempered demon is the Evil One indeed.

"All earthly things," the poet Campbell tells us, and we know it, "must come to gloom," and even a Russian *bal masqué* must have an end. The champagne has told its tale; the supper is a mass of fishy, saccharine, and gallinaceous fragments; the fiddlers are tired; fatigue has furrowed long streaks in the rouge on the dancers' cheeks; the white kid gloves begin to get cloudy at the seams; it is October with the bouquets, and they shed their leaves; and the furnace fires are burning low without. There is a rush to the *vestiaire*; Cinderella's ball is over; and the brilliantly-clad merry-makers are transformed into shapeless bales of fur pelisses again. There is a howling at the door for carriages and droschiky-sledges; torches flare, and policemen rush about savagely, cuffing recalcitrant Jehus; and then Gospodin Tchort—who has taken off his diabolical mask, slipped it into a side pocket of the enormous fur pelisse in which he has muffled himself, and replaced it by an undress military cap—moves sedately and serenely. It is plain that Gospodin

Tchort must be an officer in some regiment or other.

"*Que diable!* where is Axenti?" says the Gospodin to himself, in the purest Parisian French.

But the missing Axenti is seemingly nowhere to be found; and after waiting some ten minutes, the Gospodin is fain to hire an ordinary sledge. The driver, a sullen-looking fellow, with a huge red beard, asks him whither he wishes to go? He who was late a demon responds that he wishes to be put down at the corner of Mala Millianaia, over against the monolith erected to the memory of the First Alexander. The Ischvostchik (such is the sledge driver's generic appellation) gives a sulky "Da, das!" (Yes, yes) and bestrides his seat. Gospodin Tchort, muffling himself more than ever in his *schoub* (pelisse), mounts the sledge too, and off they go over the hard snow.

Now, know all men that about this time murders were frightfully prevalent in St. Petersburg; and note, above all, that the majority of these murders have been committed by Ischvostchiks—by droschky or sledge drivers. One was knouted to death only the other day, at the top of the Nevski, for the murder of a German commercial traveller, whose lifeless corpse he was detected in the very act of stuffing through a hole he had broken in the ice of the Neva, opposite the Cadetten-linnie of Wassily-Ostrow. To make the example more terrible in his case, the police had issued an ordonnance, commanding all the Ischvostchiks in St. Petersburg to



attend and witness the execution. There is a dark horror in the prevalent belief that among a certain class of the Ischvostchiks there exists a species of Thuggee; that all the droschky-drivers coming from one particular village in the environs of the capital are, from their youth upwards, as professed and ruthless murderers as the votaries of Bohwanie, or the partisans of the Old Man of the Mountain; and that they take advantage of the occasional somnolency of their fares (due to the intense cold) to fall upon, rob, and slay them.

Now this sullen man with the red beard must evidently be a murderous Ischvostchik; for instead of driving his fare, as he was directed, towards the monolith of the First Alexander (which is right opposite the Winter Palace), he conducts him over the Novi-Most, or Great Iron Bridge, and so towards the vast cemetery of Wassily-Ostrow. And he must be a murderer—this rubicund ruffian—for, as the vehicle slides along the deserted “linie,” or streets, I, who am Asmodeus for the nonce, and ubiquitous, see him take from the folds of his greasy caftan a heavy hatchet, poise it in his murderous grip, and try the edge with his huge misshapen thumb, casting a cunning glance, as he does so, over his shoulder, at the stranger whom he is conveying, perchance to deadly doom; who, to the peril of his precious body, worn out with fatigue, and oppressed by the frigid narcotic in the winter night-air, is dozing behind his driver.

Little wots he now, Gospodin Tchort, as to whether

he is journeying towards Alexander's monolith, or towards Wassily-Ostrow's dank burial ground. Gospodin Tchort is tranquilly dreaming, and I, being Asmodeus, and omniscient *pro tem.*, know what he is dreaming about. Little reck he now of monolith or Winter Palace, ice or snow, droschky-drivers, or French actresses. He wanders in his sleep by the side of the blue Bosphorus; he sees the glories of the Golden Horn, his eyes are dazed by the minarets of Stamboul and the great dome of Sophia. He sees the Padishah of Roum float down the stream in his gilded caique, towards the Valley of Sweet Waters; he wanders in the mazes of the Bezesteen; the secretest gardens of the old seraglio are open to him; and then suddenly, by the charming irrationality of dreams, he is transported to a town in Southern Russia, and sees a sign-post with an inscription, placed there by Catherine the Superb, "This is the road to Byzantium."

Waken, hapless sluggard, for the Philistines are upon thee. Waken, drowsy traveller, for death is imminent. Waken, man in the fur pelisse, for the murderous Ischvostchik has got thee close to the solitary churchyard, has turned him round on his seat, has raised his sharp hatchet. Waken, for the fate of an Empire—

Gospodin Tchort wakes. Wakens, murmuring something about a treaty. Wakens to find the murderer standing over him with gleaming eyes and uplifted hatchet.

"I demand thy money," cries the Ischvostchik, seeing that he cannot slay his victim sleeping.

No other man in the world could have done it. No other man than—Gospodin Tchort. With lightning-like presence of mind he stands up on the seat of the sledge; he dashes on his fiend's mask, he throws off his pelisse, and shows his fiend's dress. He stands there in the sharp, green moonlight, plainly and palpably the Enemy of mankind—the Evil One.

*"I demand thy soul!"* he thunders.

*"Tchort, Tchort!"* screams the Ischvostchik, and falls down, stiff and stark, between the horse's hind feet.

Gospodin Tchort descends from his eminence and stirs the Ischvostchik somewhat disdainfully with his foot. "Get up, dog!" he says, in commanding tones.

But the dog never stirs a limb nor moves a muscle. The Gospodin routs him up again with his foot; but he is as motionless as before. He stoops down and shakes him by the arm; but the member falls to the frozen ground flaccid and inert. He calls him again and again, fruitlessly. He places his hand on his heart, but there is no pulsation. He looks on his face; and the green moonlight shows that his features are ghastly and rigid, that the eyes are fixed, and that the mouth is wide open, and grinning horribly. It is very plain that the dog is DEAD.

Dead he is beyond mistake: dead as any door-

nail. In his great terror at what he, poor superstitious wretch, doubtless imagined to be a supernatural visitation come to punish him for his sins, the cord of life has snapped, and the murderous Ischvestchik is gone to his account.

A more timorous man than Gospodin Tchort would have fled as fast as ever his legs could carry him; for to have aught to do with a dead, or even a wounded body, in Russia, is a matter of serious moment, and one sometimes highly dangerous to the surviving party. You must not raise a man from the ground who has been unfortunate enough to be run over; you must not assist one who has fallen into a pit; it is questionable even whether you may jump into the water to save a fellow-creature from drowning. Such duties are the exclusive province of the police; and if you wish to preserve your roubles and your repose, the less you meddle with that municipal institution the better.

A weaker man than our Gospodin would at least have been sorely perplexed to know what to do with the ugly burden thus unexpectedly thrown on his hands; but our diabolical friend appears to have made up his mind with very little difficulty as to the proper course to be adopted under the circumstances. The horse is quietly snuffing the ground, as if in a futile search for some impossible herbage beneath that icy crust, and the reins lie idly on his back. The Gospodin (whose strength appears to be Herculean) drags up the body of the murderous Ischvostchik by the arms, flings him across the seat



of the sledge, picks up the whip, bestrides the driver's seat himself, gives an encouraging "*puiano*," "go on," to the horse; and then, on that wintry morning, had you been there, you might have seen in the weird moonlight the strange spectacle of a man in a huge fur pelisse, with a demon's mask gleaming above it, driving a sledge away from the great cemetery of Wassily-Ostrow, while behind him was the body of a bearded, castaned man, whose arms flapped, whose booted legs dangled, in the helplessness of death.

And whither speeds the driver? To the Neva's banks, with that same sharp hatchet to cleave a cavity in the ice and consign the would-be murderer's body to the swift, sure current that runs straight into the Gulf of Finland, carrying its dead with it, and telling no tales? To the umbrageous pine-woods on the Ladoga road? To the ruins of the last conflagration, where there are holes and masses of rubbish in plenty that will hold a score of bodies such as this? Not at all. The infernal Ischvostchik drives coolly to the sixteenth line, where there is a police-station; and it is a fact that as he plies the whip he hums an air from "*Robert le Diable*."

He passes one or two of the little wooden huts, where the *Boutotsniks*, or watchmen armed with pole-axes, dwell. One sleepily challenges him; and he answers, "a friend!" and drives on. The other is comfortably asleep in his timber cabin; and, at the best of times, there is but scant vigilance to

be expected from these guardians of the night, who are more than suspected of occasionally doing a little murder on their own account. Gospodin Tchort mutters some remarks between his teeth, not at all complimentary to *Boutotsniks* in general, as he passes the second hut, and says that he "will see to it." See to what?

At the door of the police-station, or *siège*, there is a big police-soldier, in a long, grey gabardine, who gives a howl of amazement as the strangely-laden and more strangely-conducted chariot stops before him. True to his police instincts, however, he makes a movement to fall upon and arrest, as a preliminary measure, the being who is bold enough to ride about with a dead body, but Gospodin Tchort descends from his seat, pushes the *polizei* with his arm amicably on one side, and says—

"Carry that carcass in-doors, Axenti-Ivanovitch, and let me see the major of police immediately."

"My name is Fedor," the soldier begins; "and who are you——"

"SILENCE!" continues Gospodin Tchort; "hear and obey!" He is evidently accustomed to command, to be heard, and to be obeyed; for the soldier, with a blank look of astonishment, and a suppressed grumble, presently does his bidding. He wakes up the police major, who comes with a very unclean-looking blue pocket-handkerchief twisted round his bullet head, and his uniform coat but half-buttoned over his striped flannel waistcoat.

"*Schtotakoi!* What is it?" asks the police major,

who is very sleepy, and very peevish, rubbing his eyes.

Gospodin Tchort takes, quite uninvited, a chair, and in a few succinct phrases tells the story of his night's adventure, accounting for his mask by alluding to the masquerade. As he proceeds, the police major brightens up to a thorough state of wide wakefulness, shakes his head ominously, and dipping a pen into a battered inkstand, begins to fill up a printed form. He looks at the awful testimony of the drama that has been enacted, and which, beginning to stiffen now, lies hideously stark on a guard-bed, and shakes his head more ominously than ever.

"A pretty story, indeed," he says. "And who is to believe it, pray? There has been murder here. We will begin by putting the bracelets on you, my little brother, and then we will submit you to an interrogatory. Fedor, go for the surgeon, the *greffier*, and the handcuffs; and, Michael Prosperovitch, take off his mask."

"Stop!" cries Gospodin Tchort, in an accent as commanding as before. "Police major, you are an *assiot*—an ass—Behold!" He waves the soldiers imperatively back. He removes his mask, only for an instant, and replaces it. The police major starts back as he meets the stern gaze of a pair of full grey eyes, as *his* orbs of vision dwell upon a magnificent countenance, somewhat full of flesh, with a lofty brow, a rounded chin, and a firmly-chiselled mouth; a twisted moustache, dark curly hair, growing somewhat bald towards the crown, and a

short, crisp whisker invading the cheek. He starts back; and upon my word, if Gospodin Tchort had not caught him by the arm, I think he would have fallen on his knees before him.

"Let the man's body be opened," the Gospodin says. "He must have been suffering from some internal disease for death to attack him so suddenly. And now get me another sledge, and let me go home, for I will ride no more in that hateful carriage. Let the horse be sent to the fire brigade, and see that the sledge is sold for the benefit of the poor.

The major's private sledge is brought out; his best horse harnessed to it; his costliest furs laid on the seat. Gospodin Tchort takes off his mask and puts on his undress cap again; but he entirely conceals his features behind the collar of his pelisse.

"You will drive me to the monolith of Alexander, opposite the Mala Millionnaia," he says to the coachman. "Make haste, and gallop." He jumps in; the driver cracks his whip, and they are gone.

"Fedor Nicolaïevitch," says the major of police, very sternly, when the strange visitor has departed—Fedor Nicolaïevitch, son of a dog! it strikes me that you did not pay sufficient attention or respect to yonder well-considered and honoured lord. Corporal of the night, you will take care that Fedor Nicolaïevitch has eighty blows of the stick, at eight o'clock, for want of proper respect to his superiors." And the police major, yawning, lights his cigarette, and goes to bed.



By and by, just as the unhappy Fedor is beginning to howl for his breach of etiquette, the *yemstchik*, who has driven Gospodin Tchort to his destination, comes back to the police-station.

"He must be a great lord—perhaps an aide-de-camp of the Gossudar, the Emperor," he says. "He gave me a 'blue' (a five-rouble note), and I watched him go straight into the Winter Palace. Wilt thou drink with me, Michael Prosperovitch? Ah! and so our brother Fedor is eating of the stick, is he?"

The autopsy of the body of the murderous Ischvostchik is made by the surgeon to the police, and it is found that the unhappy man had been for a long time suffering under acute disease of the heart. Far gone as he was in that dreadful malady, any sudden shock or excitement was sufficient to cause death; and it was perfectly natural, that the revulsion of feeling caused by that which he believed to be the appearance of the Evil One himself should end fatally. A lengthened report of the circumstances is drawn up by the major of police, and is sent to the Winter Palace. Some weeks afterwards, that functionary receives a miniature, set in gold, representing an officer in the uniform of the Chevalier Guards, with a star on his breast, and the red ribbon of St. Andrew *en sautoir*. The officer's face is stern, but handsome, eminently handsome. He has full grey eyes, a lofty brow, a rounded chin, a firmly-chiselled mouth, a twisted moustache, dark curly hair, somewhat inclining to baldness towards

the crown, and a short, crisp whisker invading the cheek. And beneath the miniature is the initial N.

I forgot to state that the story of the Murderous Ischvostchik does *not* get into the St. Petersburg newspapers. We manage those things better in Russia.

## About Shrimpsington.

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THE poets, dear neighbour, tell us that there is no sorrow more poignant than the remembrance of happy days in misery. They have been telling us so in a dozen languages for centuries. Dante has said it in Italian, Malesherbes in French, Alfred Tennyson in English ; and, for aught we know, it is being said or sung now by the poet in ordinary to the Tycoon of Japan, the bard accompanying himself, meanwhile, on a mandolin all covered with lacquer work. Now, in this case, neighbour, I would have you not to believe the poets. You may trust them—so far as you can see them—when they sing about the skylarks, and rude Boreas, or gentle Zephyr, though they are sometimes wide of the mark in their ornithology—bringing down their game with very long shots from very long bows—and though the late General Reid would have taught them something worth knowing about the Law of Storms. But you really must disregard their pretty paradoxical rhymes for once. I will demolish the poets in a trice ; for this is Christmas time, and having two dinner invitations for the day—I shall throw over the one in Camberwell Grove—I am valorous and self-confident. No sorrow more poig-

nant than the remembrance of happy days in misery! How about those who have never been happy at all? Let me put a case. Here are Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy going to be married at the ivy-grown church. Pipe and tabor, and "loud bassoon," of course, playing before. Bridegroom's papa crying, he doesn't know why; bride's mamma crying more plentifully—why, she knows full well. Bridegroom's best man looking very much as though he would like to be married himself; bridesmaids blushing and giggling as though they were of the same way of thinking: bride and bridegroom looking as such young couples only can look under similar circumstances—deliciously uncomfortable, and pleasantly terrified; little boys following the procession cheering, and long-bodied dog, with the hair all off his left flank, bringing up the rear, one ragged ear cunningly cocked, and possibly with some thoughts, too, of matrimony in his doggish head. Now there stands by the church porch a certain widower, who, but a few months since, has buried a fair young wife in the green God's Acre. Pipe and tabor, loud bassoon and merry train pass him, and he bows his head very sorrowfully, and turns away. They would fain bid him to the wedding feast, but he is too sad. Yes; and is full of remembrance of his own happy time. But see, over against him stands moody, with folded arms and bent brow, in coarse gray woollen shroud and sandalled feet, Brother Meagrim the Trappist. Pipe and tabor, loud bassoon and merry train pass



him too ; but they avoid his gloomy looks, and he eyes them evilly. The widower hies him home and sits solitary, but with a chastened tenderness in his heart, and, perchance, humming fitfully the air which his dear dead girl used to sing as she plied her knitting on the hassock at his feet. The Trappist stalks to his monastery, and so into the field, whence, after digging for an hour at his own grave, he skulks to his cell, there, in the society of the skull, the hour-glass, and the homilies of St. Grid-iron the Great, to eat his own heart. Which is the most miserable man ? He who has possessed and lost all but happy memories, or he who has never found, and is forbidden to seek, and can look, backward or forward, but upon a dead level, quite barren, hopeless, and forlorn ?

Though sackcloth I wear for my sins, and sickness lay me by the heels, though the crust of the loaf in the cupboard be low, and naught but the stump of the cheque-book remain, I would not surrender—no, not one—of the memories of by-gone happy days, and their remembrance shall gild the gray horizon now, and turn the barley-water into Burgundy. Would you have me think with dolour now, because Fortune frowns, of the happy days and nights I have spent ? When I first fell in love, when I first—but it was Alpha and Omega—heard some one say they loved me ; when I first tasted pineapple-ice, heard Grisi, and saw the *Belle Jardinière* of Raffaëlle ! Away, sighers and moaners ! We *will* think of the *tempo felice*—the

happy time, even when our lodging is on the cold ground, in the deepest dungeon beneath the castle moat. We will recal these days, with a strong and courageous hope and faith that the bolts shall be drawn, and the fetters stricken off, the castle razed to the ground, and the tyrannical baron exemplarily hanged! Yea, and then the happy days shall return again, fuller of joy than ever!

Now, I especially hold, neighbour, with the preservation of these wholesome remembrances with respect to the days of days in our life-calendar—the Christmases. For my own part, I know my Christmas days by heart, can tell them backwards on my fingers, can remember them *seriatim* from the day that I can remember anything at all. Many of them merry, some, by Heaven's goodness, almost inexpressibly happy—some mournful—one dark and almost despairing, but all remembered well.

Some twenty-five Christmas days can I recal distinctly, and, were they sad or joyful, they are all equally memorable. The very happiest, however, had a pleasant sameness about them that would move your indignation if narrated. Many of my readers, I hope, would like to kiss the same young lady at forfeits for ten years running, yet the ten-fold reiteration of the description of the feat would be intolerable. Still, two Christmases find place on my bed-roll, which, not being there, would cause one British writer the less to address you in this present year of grace. They are the Christmases I spent at SHRIMPINGTON-SUPER-MARE.

Very nearly twelve years ago I was of age, and of opinion that the eyes of Europe were upon me. It is impossible to express the contempt I felt for young men who were *not* of age, and how fully I concurred with some writer of the day who scoffed at the idea of youths falling in love before they had attained their twenty-first year. So, being my own master, I straightway became somebody else's slave, and acted in the usual manner of fools according to their own folly.

Yes; I was certainly very much in love in the winter of the eventful year that poor old Louis Philippe tumbled off the throne which his own shuffling had made so slippery. I must have been in love, because my sweetheart and I quarrelled so frequently. We had, on one of the gloomiest days in November, a ferocious fall out about an abominable little Skye terrier of my Lucy's, which was always snapping at my ankles, and with which—meeting the beast *alone* one day in the passage—I had had a few words causing him to yelp fearfully. *She* vowed never to speak to me again; and I went off to Paris in a huff.

Of course, we were reconciled very speedily, through the medium of the general post—in these days I believe we should have made it up by telegraph—nevertheless I could not help stopping a week or eight days in Paris, not having seen the dear old place since I was a boy at school. The time, however, came at last for my return to “England, home, and beauty.” A very pretty message

from Beauty herself intimated that I was expected to dine with Beauty's papa and mamma on Christmas day; and December was growing old, when, one stormy night, I stood shivering in the peculiarly uncomfortable waiting-room of the more uncomfortable custom-house at Cæsarville, in the county of Kent, having just landed—if crawling up a ladder and on to a slimy quay may be called landing—wet, cold, and weary from her Majesty's Royal mail packet *Squidfish*.

The morning of the next day was a glorious one. Bright, sunny, bracing. Sky blue and without a cloud. Sea dancing, and flickering, and kissing the shore like sportive girls round a good tempered old gentleman. I walked about the town, looked at the castle, peered up the shaft, glanced at the queer little summer-houses nestling far up among the chalky heights, and wondered that some of them didn't tumble down once or twice a week, talked to the boatman, lost my hat on the pier, and gave a shilling to a boy in a suit of tarpaulin for running after it, went back to the "Centurion Hotel" and had my breakfast, smoked one of the incredibly bad cigars for which Cæsarville is famous, wondered whereabouts on the beach Cæsar himself landed, and whether he came here *summâ diligentia* as he did into Gaul, strolled to the basin, and shook my fist at my old (last night) enemy, her Majesty's Royal mail packet *Squidfish*. The result of all these perambulations was, that I missed the morning trains one after the other; and found after lunch and



some ale—the ale is excellent at Caesarville—that I should have to wait till four p.m. for a train, and that a slow one, to convey me to London. I rather like missing trains than otherwise; it gives you so much extra time; so I had half made up my mind, not being due in town till late next day, to pass another twelve hours in Caesarville, when the foxy waiter remarked that there was a coach to St. Beeketsbury at three, and that perhaps I might like to see the “Kthedral.” I wondered, at the time, whatever a servitor of an hotel could mean by advising a traveller, who seemed able to pay his bill, to seek other pastures; but I am of opinion now, either that the foxy waiter was a fool, or that he hated the landlord or landlady of the “Centurion Hotel” with more than Indian ferocity, and that he desired nothing better than to lure travellers away from the good accommodation and neat wines of that well-conducted caravanserai. Be it as it may, I took his advice, and an outside place by the three o’clock coach to St. Beeketsbury.

I had never visited that ancient cathedral city, and longed to do so. What lover of old English legends, what student of old English manners and customs, would not share my desire? Famous old saintly city of Kent, embosomed in fertile valley, girdled in by woody hills and grassy slopes, from which run dancing rills! I wanted to see Cogan’s Hospital; to find some graybeard who would point out the spots where once stood Newin and Otchill and Winecheap gates, and St. Mildred’s postern;

the ancient Worthgate with its "bayle," and the mighty Dane John. I thirsted to behold the immortal "Chequers Inn," where Chaucer's pilgrims assembled, mingling piety with conviviality, and whence, perchance, issued the "bacon-fed knaves" whom Falstaff robbed on Gadshill; chiefest of all I longed to see the glorious cathedral; and with hushed footsteps approach the spot where once stood the shrine of the martyred Saint Thomas of Becketbury. And as the coach bore me up and down the steep hills that surge throughout the sixteen miles that lie between Caesarville and St. Becketbury, I tried to recal the grim scene of slaughter as I had read of it: of the monks crooning forth the vesper chaunt in the choir, and the two children rushing up the nave, and telling more by gestures than by speech that armed men were forcing the gates of the cathedral. Of the bad knights trampling with mailed feet through the cloisters, vizors drawn over their faces, that were blanched as much by terror at the deed they were about to do, as by the raging hate that made them do it. Vindictive Tracy, fierce Robert Fitz-Ranulph, scowling Hugh of Horsea surnamed Mauclore, Robert de Broc's chaplain, and furious Fitzurse, with the axe he had taken from the carpenters, hoarsely shouting, "Here, here, King's-men!" Of the undaunted archbishop, standing defiant on the altar steps—the craven ecclesiastics of his suite—all, save Robert of Merton and William Fitz-Stephen, fled. "Where is Becket, traitor to the king?" Fitzurse

crying, with hungry hatchet swinging to and fro. Clear and sonant, from the crepuscular shade of pillars and arches comes a voice—"Reginald, here I am: Archbishop and Priest of God: no traitor. What seek you?" Of the last deadly struggle in the chapel of Saint Benedict. The horrid blows dealt with sword and axe; the martyr at last—in his white rochet, cloak, and hood—falling, his hands joined in prayer, flat on his face on the pavement, and with such dignity that his mantle, which extends from head to foot, is not disarranged. "I commend my cause, and the cause of the church, to God, to St. Denys of France, to St. Alphage, and to the saints of the church." So he falls—

"Deserted in his utmost need,  
By those his former bounty fed,  
On the bare earth exposed he lies,  
With not a friend to close his eyes."

So fell Darius. And the murderers thrust their swords into his gaping wounds, and scatter his brains over the pavement, the wretched Maucero (striking but a corpse) crying, "Let us go! let us go! the traitor is dead—he will rise no more!" Not here, O Maucero! but rise again he will, and testify to thy damnation!

"St. Becketsbury! St. Becketsbury!" I repeated as the "spanking tits," which, by the way, were on this occasion more "spanked" themselves than "spanking," clattered along. At St. Becketsbury is the tomb of the famous Black Prince. He lies

in the cathedral : his marble effigy recumbent ; his arms hanging above—

“ His sword is rust,  
His bones are dust,  
His soul is with the Saints, we trust.”

And over his grave is cast the casual shadow of three feathers, that will be famous as an historic symbol so long as history endures. Curious link that binds this old carved tomb in Becketbury minster with the bloody field of Cressy ; with blind King John of Bohemia tying his horse's bridle to that of the knight next him, and charging into the hot fight, to be found afterwards in that field of carnage, “his old, blind face looking very blindly to the stars ;” on his shield blazoned a plume of three ostrich feathers, with “Ich Dien,” “I serve,” written under—with which every English reader is to be familiar ever after.

“St. Becketbury, St. Becketbury,” I kept repeating, exhilarated by the bracing atmosphere, the rapid locomotion, and the fumes of some capital *caporal* tobacco I had purchased just before I left Paris—I think, too, I must have had some money in my pocket, which fully accounts for any extra exuberance of spirits. Why, I am in the very centre of Tom Ingoldsby's delightful legend land ! Hereabouts must be the churchyard where lay the drowned mariner, who persisted after death in grinning in a ghastly and unearthly manner to the discredit of St. Bridget ; not far from here are the



sands to which was washed the skull of Graydolphin, kicked (to his own destruction) by the wicked baron who so imperiously demanded his boots. Not far from here dwelt the Leech of Folkestone, and the naughty, handsome sorceress who stuck corking pins into waxen images, affected the society of black cats, and was partial to olive-skinned young gentlemen of Spanish extraction. My head began to swim with the wild legends of the chronicler of Tappington Everard. I raised my eyes from my perch on the box-seat, skyward, as though in quest of Madge Gray and Goody Price, skimming through the air on broomsticks; but then I remembered that we were already half way to St. Becketsbury; and that I should see the "dark entry" to the Dean's Yard, and read the grim legend of Nell Cook: how the dark lady from the Spanish Main came to see the prior, whom she hailed as uncle; and how the infuriated cook put the poker and the tongs in that fair lady's bed, and ultimately made a warden pie, "with doctor's stuff inside," eating which, both the prior and his niece died horribly. How, at the funeral of the ill-fated pair,

"The sacristan, he said no word to indicate a doubt,  
But he put his thumb up to his nose, and spread his fingers  
out."

How, centuries after, the skeleton of Nell Cook was discovered under a flagstone in the "dark entry," where she had been buried alive by the cruel monks, with a piece of the fatal warden pie

beside her ; how the masons who disintombed her remains all came to a bad end : two were hanged at Tyburn-tree for murdering of the third ;

“ And one got burnt, and one got drowned, and one beyond the  
seas

Got scraped to death with oyster-shells, among the Caribbees.”

And how the ghost of Nell Cook has haunted the “dark entry” every Friday night since, to the dismay of the maid-servants who are sent out at nine o’clock for the “Dean’s supper-beer.”

All these things I thought of, and all these visits I intended to pay. As it so fell out, however (and has fallen out a good many times in this narrator’s life), no part of my intention was fulfilled. That same ship, *Good Intent*, A 1, copper-bottomed, and registered at a mental Lloyd’s, was, before the day was out, wrecked and stranded, hard and fast at Shrimpington-super-Mare.

For I must needs leave the coach at Daiseybridge, six miles from St. Becketsbury, just to pay a flying visit to Shrimpington, designing to walk afterwards to the Cathedral city, and so take train. The day was so fine and bracing, you see. Shrimpington is quite discernible from the summit of Daisey-bridge hill, being, indeed, but two miles distant therefrom ; but I did not pay my flying visit to it on foot. To tell the truth, there sat beside me outside the coach a worthy farrier, in a drab shooting-jacket and light cords, who gave me such a glowing description of Shrimpington—he did not

in the least mean it to be enthusiastic—as one of the queerest places you ever set eyes on—"the last village made after the flood, and then only half finished"—that I snuffed game at once, and murmured, mentally, "For Shrimpington, ho!" The farrier, who was a most conversational person, would not hear of my walking to Shrimpington; he had a light cart, "under duty," with his mare "Sukey"—particulars of whose life, extraction, education, and manners, and of her former owner, the butcher, and penultimate proprietor, the cooper, he was good enough to give me in full—waiting for him at the "Willing Mind" Inn, Daiseybridge; so, after moderate refection at the last-named establishment, I, the farrier, and my portmanteau, were all rattling in the light cart, after the black mare, down the break-neck hill which led into the valley of chalky meadow, in the centre of which—a ring of white chalk round it—lay Shrimpington, like a toy Geneva watch in a big, dusty hand. And all beyond the wintry sea.

I slept that night at the "Godwin's Head," Shrimpington, and I awoke the next morning in as fine an access of rheumatic gout as a man of indifferent constitution could well desire. It may be that the sheets were not aired: it is certain that I forgot to put the looking-glass into bed, previous to getting in myself, according to my usual custom, for the farrier had betaken himself to singing sentimental songs during the evening, and we were rather late. It may have been the bracing air,

over the bleak downs. At all events, I was "down with the rheumatiz" to my heart's content, and lay groaning for five days. I took to hobbling about the town, after that, with a stick; but I was no longer in a hurry to reach London. *I had been compelled to spend Christmas-day at Shrimpington*, and there was the oldest of scratches to pay not a hundred miles from Mornington Crescent. "Sir: no further communication from you will receive the slightest attention, from yours obediently, Lucy." This was the sort of *billet doux* I had to cheer me during my convalescence. We never made it up. William Edward Noseby, of the London and Westminster Bank, who hated and was jealous of me, told her—I afterwards discovered—that I was seen dancing at the Salle Valentino, Paris, on the very day I wrote to her to say that I was lying in excruciating agonies, in bed, at Shrimpington. I must have correspondents there, she said—"vile creatures, who abet you in your wicked, wicked subterfuges," she called them in her concluding epistle, dated Wednesday. She didn't have Noseby after all, but married a Mr. Cheale, and went to Canada. The climate is very sharp there, I believe, and I hope Cheale's bones have benefited thereby, and that Welsh flannel and opodeldoc are as dear as turtle soup is here.

I have done with an unpleasant subject, and can now devote myself wholly to Shrimpington. After all, it took at least fifty per cent. away from the dolour of the rheumatism, to reflect upon the



genuine kindness and sympathy I experienced from the worthy people who kept the house. In many country places, my moustache—a vanity I then affected, but which has since, I rejoice to say, come away in patches, like the hair from a trunk that has been kept in the damp—might have created, at the outset, a prejudice against me; but the Shrimingtonians were a sea-going race, were always having friends and relatives coming home from “farrin parts,” very much bronzed, and with prodigious quantities of hair on their faces, and had rather a partiality for “outlandish folks” than otherwise. I was outlandish enough for them, in all conscience. I am sure that if Mr. Whelks, of the “Godwin’s Head”—formerly a channel pilot—had been my father; if Mrs. Whelks, some time cook and housekeeper to Squire Gervoise, of the Priory, had been my mother; and if Amy Whelks, aged seventeen, their only and blooming child, had been my sister, or—well! out with it—my sweetheart, they could not have shown me more attention, or taken more care of me.

Shrimington-super-Mare had been at one time a fishing and shipping port of some consequence: one of the Onze ports, indeed; and there were legends that at some remote period of time it had been a borough, returned members to Parliament, and had rejoiced in a mayor and corporation. But I suppose the M. and C. had misbehaved themselves during some epoch of our history—perhaps refused to lend the king money—and the irate sovereign

had taken away their charter. Indeed there were two rickety, bulging storeys of crumbling red brick, with stone dressings, over the market as the damp little cavern supported by corrugated beams, where a few vendors of fish and vegetables assembled at their stalls every Saturday morning, was called ; and this, still according to tradition, had once been the town-hall. I persuaded the shaky old man who kept the keys of this deserted abode of bygone municipal glories, to allow me to ascend the rotting stairs, and peep into the dilapidated chambers. There was one room in tolerably good repair, where Squire Gervoise and the Reverend Mr. Cobbum, ordinarily called Parson Cobbum, sat in petty sessions when there was anything to adjudicate upon in Shrimpington, civilly, or criminally, which was but seldom. There was another room, with "collector of the port" painted on the door ; but as there was no longer any port, or anything to collect, save mud, shingle, and stale fish, the great community of rats had long since held undisturbed possession of it. And there was a long low apartment underneath the roof, with blank windows reaching to the floor, and set close together, like holes that had been hastily glazed with any odd panes of horn lanterns or scraps of bottle-glass that came handy ; an apartment in a generally woful condition, and which always gave me the impression that the upstairs room in Temple Bar must be its twin brother.

This dreary chamber, from whose damp ceiling

the very cobwebs dropped off in despair at the exceeding moisture, was cumbered with odds and ends, through which I should have dearly liked to rummage, and all of which I connected with the defunct importance of Shrimpington when it was a borough. There were great scales and weights all rusted and bent about, there were dismantled balustrades, and legless, inkstandless desks; rolls of worm-eaten baize, which in the few spots where colour at all existed, showed a dull crimson, and tied with rotting cord. These rolls of baize had, perchance, been laid down when foreign notabilities—great barons and puissant seignors—had landed at Shrimpington, and walked to the town-hall, to be entertained by the mayor and corporation. But what mostly interested me were the huge rolls of ragged paper and worm-eaten parchment mouldering away peaceably in corners amid heaps of those indefinable scraps of rubbish which always seem to accumulate, heaven knows from whence, in a room which has gone to decay. I could have taken my affidavit that these old rolls contained rough draughts of that bygone corporation's addresses to the great people who had visited Shrimpington in the days of its grandeur, if it had ever had any grandeur. From some of the rat-gnawed parchment scrolls I could discern tatters of ribbon furtively peeping, to which were attached lumps of decaying matter, which had once been seals. "Thus runs the way of the world," I said to myself: "it is not such a very glaring improbability to believe



that her Majesty Queen Anne, of blessed memory, may have visited Shrimpington; nay, in this very room she may have held a temporary court, in order to 'touch for the evil,' and have hung pieces of angel gold about the necks of fisher children. The corporation presented her with a loyal and dutiful address, and she returned a gracious answer—entombed among yon mouldering *débris*. What does it matter now? the words of fulsomeness, the ink almost expressed from them, lie there as futile as old love-letters." So, thus moralizing, I left the place.

I now went down to have a look at the "port." It was the most woebegone excavation, full of mud and fishy refuse, you ever saw. There was a brig, with a broom at her masthead, which had been for sale for the last quarter of a century: but the inhabitants of Shrimpington had at least shown some common sense by unanimously refusing to buy her during that period of time. They had further displayed some of the wisdom of the serpent by purloining the major portion of her timbers for firewood; and she lay now high and dry upon the mud, a very ghastly wooden skeleton to view. Some old wherries gone to irrevocable seed plashed in the scant puddles where there was any water; high tide, though it must have occurred at its stated seasons, never greeted my eyes in Shrimpington. From either extremity of the hole facetiously denominated a "basin," there jutted out seaward a crazy pier, supported on a cobweb frame-



work of timbers, black, turned up with green, and finished off with seaweed and barnacles, the interstices of the timbers themselves being filled with jagged stones. The piers, albeit stunted, and the planks that formed their platform gone to an oozy decay, were solid enough in their foundations. Only those versed in the early chronicle of the Onze Ports could tell how long they had stood there, their bases washed by the pertinacious waves, now angry, now imploring, like a passionate woman at the feet of an obdurate and immoveable man. Yes, sea, you wash away landmarks, bear away cliffs, submerge churches, engulf whole towns and villages; but you are to be vanquished sometimes. The marble blocks that Trajan fenced the harbour of Civita Vecchia withal, yet defy the treacherous encroaching blue; and many a gaunt old Pharos yet stands flashing its torches mockingly in the crested waves, and laughing their fury to scorn.

There was plenty of beach at Shrimpington, and, about a mile from the east pier, plenty of cliff—grim, chalky upland, from whose lean height few would care to hang to gather samphire or sea-mews' nests, and crowned with a ragged wig of gray-green herbage. On the east cliff—the town itself lying in the valley—was Shrimpington old church, an humble fabric of shard and shingle, but immensely old, originally a temple of Neptune, erected by Alexander Severus, destroyed by the Danes, partially rebuilt by Ethelred the Unready, finished by the King Stephen whose nether habiliments cost

him but a crown, half demolished by Cromwell's General Ireton, and at last "beautified" and quite spoiled by a Dutch architect. This old church had a marvellous slate steeple all awry, perhaps involuntarily emulating the leaning tower of Pisa, and with a deformed weathercock on its apex, which bore an equal resemblance to a dismasted ship and a split herring. The churchyard was a dead green sea, crested with gray-white tombstones to the memory of departed master-mariners and ship-chandlers, sometime of this parish. The interior of the church presented the not unusual spectacle of beautiful architecture, tracery, and carving covered with thick coats of whitewash, and an organ-loft, in which, on Sundays, the oldest inhabitant of Shrimlington accompanied the psalms on a violoncello, while the youngest bachelor kept him in countenance with a clarionet, and which was, moreover, disfigured by a hideous board trumpeting forth in chocolate paint and whitewash the semi-ruination of the church, decoratively speaking, with excessive whitewash, under the auspices of Noah Scaleyshad and Perfect Prawnby, churchwardens. In the chancel there were some dim monumental brasses, a handsomely-carved mural tablet, held up by bloated cupids, and surmounted by death's heads, pincapples, hour-glasses, scythes, cornucopias, and laurel crowns—quite Elizabethan—in remembrance of Don Juan José Maria Ramon Sanchez y García y Iturbide, a hidalgo of Spain, cast on the shore near Shrimlington, "after ye terrible wrecke of ye

Spanyshe kynge's Galleon 'Amor y Caridad,' A.D. 1588," whose body was afterwards recognised by the sole survivor from the wreck, "Luis, his faithful blacke boye." A store of moidores was, I presume, sent from Spain by some disconsolate Inez or Ximena, to raise this monument to the drowned Hidalgo: never more to wear Toledo rapier, or be inflamed by wicked eyes glancing over a fan; never more to hold rope-ladders, or twang guitar, or slay commendatores. Very dead, this drowned Don. I pass over the innumerable tablets to divers worthy squires, from the times of Edward IV. downwards, all of the Gervoise line, and lords of this manor of Shrimpington. Rest they all in peace, they and the recumbent figure of "Dame Patience Gervoise, very loving wyfe of Sir Chauncey Gervoise, called of ye goldenne arme"—why?—who lies under a richly carved Gothic canopy, whitewashed, of course. She died *en couches*, poor woman, and the little marble effigy of her still-born baby nestles on her breast.

So this of the old church. Along the west cliff, abased almost to the beach, there ran a straggling line of quaint old houses—some of them little more than hovels—timber built, their gables forming frontage, and carefully tarred in every plank. They were all extremely fishy. All, through their doors perpetually on the jar, offered the same perspective interior of crockery, dried sea-weed, tobacco-smoke, well-scrubbed floors sanded, deal tables, and children more or less accoutred in salt-smelling tarpaulin. One or two houses were pretentious, and



had gardens, from whose rich chalk and shingle soil sprang abundant crops of under-garments, blue striped mostly, fluttering from poles, dried fish impaled, and cats contemplative on lean-to roofs.

I have little to say concerning the adult maritime population of Shrimpington. They were, I was given to understand, somewhat of a lazy generation, and looked upon the neighbouring workhouse more in the light of a caravanserai, with nothing to pay, devised for the use of them and their heirs for ever, than as an abode of pauperism. They were not very courageous, either, at Shrimpington; and though not averse, betimes, to a quiet bout of smuggling, and enjoying rather an unenviable reputation as wreckers, they never evinced any particular desire to "man the life-boat," or to respond to the appeal, of guns signalling distress. They fished, and mended their nets, and cured some of their finny game, seldom fought, and drank a thin, sour beer, known as "civil;" and when their children were fractious, forbore to smack them, but gave them coppers, and, in default of the circulating medium, oyster-shells.

Some of these saline stoics had olive complexions, glittering eyes, and long, lissome blue-black hair; and some odd names existed among them—Rodricks, Miggles, Gummiz, and Alvreys, suggestive of the Rodrigues, Miguels, Gomezes, and Alvarezes of a certain place called sunny Spain. The folklore of Shrimpington said that a company of shipwrecked Spanish mariners had been allowed



to form a colony here, after the dispersion of the Spanish Armada, and had insensibly been absorbed among the Jutes and Angles. From this you may judge that they were a pacific race, idle and unenterprising, who gave the relieving-officer more trouble than the rural policeman. They were grossly ignorant, and almost incredibly superstitious. Ghosts and witches abounded; and when the strange wanderer Thom—half-maniac, half-impostor—who called himself Sir Edward Courtenay, disturbed the countryside about St. Becketsbury with his mystical pranks, and was at length slain by the soldiers—after himself shooting a gallant young officer to death—Shrimpington numbered more than one enthusiast who made pilgrimages to the dead-house where the corpse of the mad mountebank lay, with kerchiefs which they vainly prayed to be allowed to dip in his blood.

Don't think I learned all this by personal observation or inquiry. I limped too sorely, I brooded too frequently on that young person near Mornington Crescent, to wander or to seek much. My chief informant, my prime chronicler, my inexhaustible talking guide-book, was Mr. Prawnby, the jeweller, of No. 7, in the High Street.

Which was no more like a High Street than I am like the Emperor of Siam, but it was called the "High Street," and shall have its title. Such a breakneck little thread of a semi-blind alley! the tarred cabins of the cliff turned another way, and diversified here and there by a mean little brick

house, with a projecting "bulk" of blackened timber above the ground floor. There were the butcher's shop, Mr. Bailey's, the greengrocer's, two bakers, both opposition, and hating each other cordially—they had married sisters; the hosier and linen-draper's, the blacksmith's—my friend the farrier, by the way, and the noisiest man in the little town—the milliner's, she was not by any means the love-lorn old maid you usually find under similar circumstances, but a jolly widow, with a tribe of children. The bookseller's, his wife was a stay-maker; the tailor's, he sold ironmongery and hearth-brooms; the chemist's, half his shop was devoted to the retail confectionery business; the ship chandler's, he had a sack of sea biscuits, a coil of rope, and a sou'wester hat at his door, in case any distraught ship, with an ancient mariner aboard and an albatross hung about his neck, should turn up on those forsaken shores, and should need chandlery; but his hopes seemed long since to have been on the wane, and so he had thrown himself into the "hame," or cart-horse collar business, with an energy which had somehow stopped half-way, and then struck off at a tangent, resulting in tailor's trimmings. I need not enumerate all the shops—I have named enough, perhaps, already: humble, poorly-furnished little *baragues* they were mostly, and inspired you with the notion that stock-taking at Christmas would not be a very difficult task to their proprietors. Some few houses of a little more pretension specked the double line of cabins like

plums in a pudding. There was the Methodist Chapel—Reverend Jabez Fishtail, minister: there was the lawyer's big brass plate, as usual; there was Miss Twigg's boarding and day school for young ladies; and there was the doctor's—the real medical man of the place—Doctor Quinington. His was a pretty little *maisonette* at the very top of the town, white, with green verandahs, a garden behind and a shrubbery before, the nattiest, most cheerful house in Shrimington-super-Mare.

As for my friend—he ultimately became my friend—Mr. Prawnbly, he appeared to sell everything. He was ostensibly a jeweller and watch-maker:—was so in name, on his shop cornice; but there was a covert insinuation of “money lent,” and a faded painting of three golden balls on a glass door; and to tell the truth, the Shrimingtonians being indolent, impoverished, and improvident, his briskest business was in the pawnbroking line. But his commercial attributes did not stop here. He sold Dutch clocks. He sold quadrants, sextants, and binnacles. He had a dreary little show of wretchedly-executed oil paintings, and out-of-fashion engravings, printed from almost worn-out plates. You could buy birdcages at Mr. Prawnbly's. He had a neat stock of pious books in very gay binding. He tempted your eyes with beach-pebbles set as bracelets and necklaces, and with landscapes formed by variously-coloured sand in bottles. He was the sole agent for Dellacrusca's delicious nux vomica farinaceous food, for old Doctor Mephibosheth's



tincture of assafoetida, for the celebrated Shaking Quaker's herbal pills (in family boxes, price eleven shillings), and for the "Irreproachable and British Indivisible Fire and Life Assurance Company." A very notable tradesman, Mr. Prawnby.

"Yes, sir," he replied, good-naturedly, to me one day when I was rallying him on the diversity of his stock, "I may say that I sell everything." "Fishing-rods and tackle?" "Yes, sir, I sell those, and likewise eel-spears. (He always called you "sir," and was intensely polite.) Double-barrelled guns I am unfortunately out of, but expect a consignment shortly." "Coffins?" "No, sir; you are really too hard upon me. Fry, the carpenter, *makes* the coffins; but many and many is the funeral that I have 'furnished' and 'performed' for the surrounding tradesmen and gentry." "Wedding-rings?" "I rather think I *do* sell wedding-rings. Why, bless my heart, sir, where can your eyes be? There are half a dozen wedding-rings on a card in the window."

I stepped outside, and verified Mr. Prawnby's assertion. True enough, between a battered silver teapot, a miniature of Queen Caroline in a hat and feathers, a hunting-whip, and a copy of Baxter's Bible, there hung a card, to which were stitched six plain, serviceable wedding-rings. Prawnby, who was a great humourist, made a joke directly I re-entered the shop, and hoped it would not be long before he had to supply me with one of the rings in question. I sighed, and thought of the inexorable young person in Mornington Crescent.



Mr. Prawnby and I were firm allies for upwards of a fortnight. My first visit to him was to obtain a new watch-key; and I found him so conversational, that, after that, scarcely a morning passed without my dropping in at his emporium, and having a quiet chat with him. He was a bachelor, and had neither kith nor kin; and, without being a misanthropist, had a settled mistrust in and dislike for the present times. "There was no good in 'em," he said, emphatically. "They were too fast for him. He couldn't keep up with 'em, not he, and he didn't mean to try. And it was his belief, sir (he said this with a withering sneer), that everything was done now-a-days by steam." I suggested, humorously, that perhaps marriages were done by steam too, and without wedding-rings, for I observed that he had not taken one off the card that held the half-dozen. He sighed, and admitted that little Barney Lypscombe—who, only a year ago, was a pedlar—had opened a working jeweller's shop down town, was under-selling him in wedding-rings, and was driving a roaring trade. But not much louder than a sucking dove could any trade have roared in eighteen hundred and forty-eight in Shrimpsington-super-Mare.

The wind roared loud enough, however, the day I left the desolate place, and came away quite strong and well. I passed Mr. Prawnby's warehouse, took a parting glass with him at the "Kings and Key," the second hostelry in Shrimpsington; I had had a parting glass, and a parting kiss too,

from somebody at the "Godwin's Head." The wind howled very dismally, and moaned a bleak farewell, as I entered the same kind-hearted farrier's light cart, drawn by the same spirited mare, Sukey, which was to bear me to Daisybridge Bridge, to meet the coach for St. Becketsbury. I felt very sad, and almost felt inclined to murmur the lines from the verse book—

"When I left thy shores, O Naxos,  
Not a tear in sorrow fell—  
Not a sigh or faltered accent  
Spoke my bosom's last arewell.

"Yet my heart sank chill within me,  
And I waved a hand as cold,  
When I thought thy shores, O Naxos,  
I should never more behold."

'Twas but an amphibious little corner of the earth ;  
yet I felt grieved to leave it. Somehow, one doesn't  
like saying farewell to anything.

But I was to behold Naxos—Shrimpington-super-Mare—once more. I was there last Christmas. Came there, too, again in my way from Cæsarville to St. Becketsbury, but this time by design. Took the coach at Cæsarville on purpose, and alighted at Daisybridge Hill, round whose once solitary ale-house a dozen neat new villas now clustered : heard that the farrier was a contractor on the Otaheitan Railway, and that I shouldn't know Shrimpington again, and walked manfully down the declivitous chalkway to the town of the extinct corporation.

Verily, I scarcely did know Shrimpington again. I had been away nine years. My heart, if not my hair, had grizzled and grown lean. There was no more shouting for the summer fruits or the harvest for me, no more singing among the vineyards and the treaders. I had served my apprenticeship to life, and had ground down my face to stern journey-work. The days and the years followed fair and foul, sunny and stormy, with a dreary exactitude, yet no two alike. Harvests of hope and vain imaginings had become a heap in the days of grief, and of desperate sorrow, and I had reaped the ears of experience with my arm.

So, three times three—the years of an hireling—had passed, and I stood once more by the sounding sea, older, sadder, richer only in regrets. But Shrimpington-super-Mare, how had the nine years used her? Used her! They had petted, coddled, made much of, metamorphosed, turned her shrimp-like head with vanity. Hold me down while I write the words—Shrimpington-super-Mare had become a WATERING-PLACE! The Novena of Annuals had turned this salt-water chrysalis into the very gaudiest of butterflies. It appears that old Squire Gervoise of the Priory, a fox-hunting conservative, “new-fangled-invention” hating landed gentleman, had died during the year following my departure from Shrimpington, and that his family had availed themselves of the circumstance to bury him. Then there came down from London, having previously sold out of one of her Majesty’s Life-

guard regiments, a bran new squire—Mr. Ibbetson Gervoise, who, to use his own vigorous location, “went in” for improvement “like one o’clock.” He was a tremendously tall young fellow, with a superabundance of animal spirits, the most liberal use of which he had made hitherto in the society of prize-fighters, horse-jockeys, and dog-fanciers; but the whim took him now—as I am delighted to say it takes many of our young nobles in the present day—to utilize his animal spirits in doing some sort of good everywhere about him, in the most rapid and muscular manner. He commenced by half pulling down the manor-house; but then, on the other hand, he pulled up Shrimpington wonderfully. Three-fourths of the tarred cabins had disappeared, and their place on the west cliff was supplied by a row of white houses—the very counterpart, in a spick and span new form, of Dr. Quinnington’s up town, all with verandahs, bright green doors, and brighter green knockers, and dignified by the name of the Grand Parade. A Grand Parade at Shrimpington-super-Mare! *There were bathing-machines on the beach*—ladies’ machines and gentlemen’s machines. They were building a boat-house, assembly-rooms, and bazaar; Alured Ibbetson Gervoise, Esq., chairman of the committee. The milliner called herself *modiste* and mantle-maker, and had six young lady assistants, who wore crinoline and their hair *à la Eugénie*. There were four chemists, who sold nothing but doctors’ stuff; and the post-office was no longer at the grocer’s, but had



a little house to itself. The doctors had multiplied wonderfully. Old Dr. Quinington, though he still resided in the place, and enjoyed a comfortable practice, was voted old-fashioned; and the crack physician was Doctor Toff, from London—the famous Doctor Toff, you know, who attended the Cochinchinese Ambassador, Fowlien Rooster, when he had the measles. There was a library on the Esplanade. The Esplanade! They were running a new pier out from the east cliff; at the two extremities of which it was proposed to place a flagstaff, a camera obscura, two real cannon, a summer-house, a photographic studio, and goodness knows what besides. Government was to be plagued and Parliament petitioned to do something for the port, which was as muddy as ever, and slightly shunned by the visitors, and sanguine hopes were entertained by some of the town's-people—the town's-people!—of deposing the head-borough or the high-constable, whichever he may have been, and getting back—if they ever had one—a charter of incorporation, with a mayor, aldermen, town-councillors, and all the honours. The old church had gone quite out of date, and there was some thought of pulling it down. There was an Evangelical Episcopal chapel, and a High Church toyshop, intensely Puseyite, and full of ecclesiological playthings. There was a Baptist's meeting-house, and the Mormons, even, were reported to have a chapel in Mrs. Wigsby's first-floor back—the tobacco and snuff shop. In place of the old, lazy, lounging, quiet, fishy inhabitants, was an anomalous

population of bathing-women, flymen—(there were flys with live horses)—donkeys, bath-chairs, foot-pages, nursery-maids, and watering-place dandies. Dandies at Shrimpington ! There was a library and a music shop, with real harps and cabinet pianofortes glittering through the plate-glass windows. Miss Twigg no longer took day scholars ; her seminary was now a " Collegiate Institute ;" and there were two other boarding-schools for young ladies in the suburbs. For Shrimpington had suburbs ; vistas of villas, New Roads, Victoria Roads, London Roads, and what not. The wretched little outlying hamlet of Scaleywort, where, in my time, were but a beer-shop, a blacksmith's forge, and half-a-dozen hovels, was now promoted to be Dunstanville, where, in Birchmore Crescent, Dr. Broomback saw his young friends after the vacations at Bamboo House : he combined hydropathic treatment with a liberal education, and a system of discipline based on moral suasion, and the sons of gentlemen only could be received. He sternly refused to take Burbidge, the actor's son, whereupon Burbidge sent him to Eton, where Doctor Goodford was delighted to receive him. In Caneington Grove, Mrs. Warmum had her preparatory school for young gentlemen. There was a French master and also an Italian master resident in Shrimpington ; a teacher of the German language, who had lost a leg at the siege of Comorn ; and a professor of the pianoforte and singing, who was supposed to be a marquis in his own country, and made desperate love to Miss Twigg. Monsieur

Kitti, of the royal operas and the nobility's balls came over from St. Beeketsbury, and established himself as a professor of dancing and calisthenics. To cap and crown all these achievements, Doctor Toff had discovered that the old Mussel Well, which had existed time out mind in Widow Skatesly's back garden, half-way between Shrimpington and Scaleywort, was a chalybeate spring, of great virtue in the treatment of almost every human ailment. It was saline, alkaline, ferruginous, all at once. People said that Doctor Toff purchased a lot of old keys and rusty barrel-loops, and threw them down the well, to render the water nasty; be that as it may, Doctor Toff wrote a thin book, hot-pressed, about the Mussel Spring of Shrimpington-super-Mare, which was published by Mr. Churchill, of Princes Street, Soho, London, and enthusiastically reviewed in the "Shrimpington Gazette and Fashionable Intelligencer," which Pybus, the printer, had recently started. They talked of a branch railway between St. Beeketsbury and the new watering-place. They talked of erecting a theatre, a music-hall, a museum; of erecting a statue to Squire Gervoise. They built an Elizabethan watchbox, brick with ragstone facings, for a vestry-hall. They built a commodious police-station, in lieu of the old cage behind the market. They defied the Pope of Rome on the platform, and in the columns of the "Shrimpington Gazette." They had a German band, and a livery-stable keeper, who let out saddle-horses, on which young ladies rode in flowing habits, cavalier

hats, doeskin trousers, and varnished boots with military heels and tiny spurs. The "Godwin's Head" was converted into a "first-class" hotel, built in the Italian style, and there were half-a-dozen more inns, and many more public-houses than were needed. Still Shrimpington hadn't a halfpenny worth of commerce beyond the contents of a few fishing-boats. The major portion of the fish consumed came down from London, now. She produced nothing, manufactured nothing. Squire Gervoise, Doctor Toff, and Nine Years, had done it all; and had played the very dickens with Shrimpington-super-Mare.

And the few years—the few years that had gone before—how had they affected the watchmaker and jeweller's shop, No. 7 in the High Street, and Mr. Prawnby, the bald-headed proprietor thereof? Alas and alack! the times had been too swift for the old man—had swept him quite out of his quaint, lowly warehouse, with its heterogeneous contents. Barnett Lypscombe, silversmith and jeweller, by appointment to his Serene Excrescence the Grand Duke of Schaffskopfschausen-Sigmaringen, now reigned in his stead. Gorgeous cases of rings, jewelled watches, emerald brooches, diamond pins, blazed in the polished window front. There were race-cups and christening-goblets, snuff-boxes and fascies of spoons, and forks of *vermeil* and of the king's and the fiddle pattern. But for all that, Mr. Barnett—whilom Barney—Lypscombe carried on the pawn-broking business with great activity and success



through the back door in Shire Lane, round the corner.

Mr. Prawnby, now very old and broken, had quietly subsided into one of the few houses with the gable towards the street which remained in Shrimington. He dwelt with an extremely deaf house-keeper, living upon a small annuity which he had purchased on selling his stock and business to Mr. Lypscombe—finding the Times and Steam too much for him. I discovered the old man in his retreat, and was pleased to find that he recognised me, and was as chatty as of yore. I stayed a whole week in Shrimington, sternly repudiating, however, the quondam "Godwin's Head," now the Sir Bevois Hotel; and put up at the "Kings and Key," which was yet an old-fashioned house; and where I and the worthy Prawnby smoked innumerable pipes, and had more than one glass of the famous "civil" beer of Shrimington-super-Mare.

## Poor Robin Redbreast.

A STORY TO BE TAKEN WITH A GRAIN OF SALT.

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WHICH grain of salt, I beg to observe, is, under no circumstances, to be placed on Robin Redbreast's tail, with a view to his capture. I should like to see anybody attempting such a liberty with my "household bird with the red stomacher."

I want to know, quite deserting ornithology, as you shall see, if there exists any invention, any delicate and elaborate device, any running tapestried warp or woof, any marvel of patient human handiwork, from the Peacock throne at Delhi to St. Cuthbert's missal in the British Museum, that can equal in beauty and delight, and in a thousand joys, that wondrous amalgam, a Pretty Girl! What a glorious mystery she is, what a concentric puzzle, what a competition-defying, rival-maddening, first-rate article! And mind—I don't require any answer to my question, now that I have posed it. I will quarrel with any man, and say cutting things to any lady, who answers it; for I have already registered a triumphant reply in the negative. Don't tell me! Take away your Nasmyth's steam-hammers and Wyon's die-sinking machines; take

away your Jacquard looms and Trotman's anchors ; take them to the dockyards and factories. They are ingenious inventions ; and you may patent them, and go to law about the infringement of the patents, till you are eaten up with equity. The pretty girl is to me the perfection of mechanism ; all nature's resources heightened and developed by all the skill of art ; the only successful instance on record of painting the lily and gilding refined gold. Take her, full front and back hair, sideways, lengthways, vertically, horizontally, she is a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. From the topmost plume of her absurd yet ravishing little bonnet, to the tiny pegs in the heels of her Balmoral boots, she is a never-ceasing exhibition of prettiness. Take her eyes, my dear sir ; take her nose ; take the exquisite mole on her left cheek ; take her cheeks, glowing with youth, and health, and innocence ; take her arched eyebrows—those bridges over the cascade of her glances ; take her glossy, wavy, or braided or ringleted hair (I had a friend who kissed a pretty girl's ringlet one day as she sat writing, of course utterly unconscious of what was going on, till he all but swallowed it) ; take the rosy tips of her ear-lobes, pendulous with the ear-rings which I am delighted to see have come into fashion again ; take her lips, that mockingly pout, or roguishly smile ; take her tiny gloved hand, which absurdly grasps a *porte monnaie* for "safety"—why, General Thumb might wrench that baby hand open ; take her slim foot, covered with the shiny or the bronzed leather, with

(ah! me) the varnished tip—facile as the descent of Avernus is the downward career of the double line of brass eyelet-holes. The pretty girls have taken to wearing red stockings—I can't stand it. Take her little waist; take her flowing drapery (I declare that I don't care if she wear nine hundred and ninety-nine skirts); take the fluttering little pennons of lace and ribbons, the shining little armoury of jewellery and nicknacks that environ her, the empyrean of perfume that surrounds her, the halo of beauty that beams round her face. "Take, O take, those lips away." "Hide, O hide, those hills of snow." Take *me* away somebody. Lock me up, tie me up, hold me down, muzzle me, gag me, put on me goggles or blinkers; blind me with red hot copper basins, like Robert Curthose. Why are these Pretty Girls permitted to go about the world to distract respectable fogies?

Little Zillah was the prettiest girl—the very prettiest girl—in Shrimpington. There had been a Beauty in the town once who came to grief; but little Zillah wore the palm now. She was so pretty that the wonder is that she was not kissed quite away by her friends and relatives, for to see Zillah, if you were on a familiar footing in the house, was to kiss her. She was obliged to state gravely, when she had attained the mature age of thirteen, that she was no longer a child, and that she objected to being kissed in future by any one save her mamma and her "pappy." This was Doctor Quinington, her papa. She was so pretty that people used to



stop her in the street and tell her how pretty she was, quite disinterestedly. She couldn't be angry. She could only blush, laugh, and trip home. They used to send her out with the most hideous old housekeeper that eyes ever beheld; and even then, bold men would murmur to one another, as she passed, "By Jove, what a pretty girl!" The young lord of the manor, Alured Ibbetson Gervoise, raved about little Zillah. He wanted to fetch Mr. Thornburn down from London to execute her miniature. He threatened with condign punishment any photographer who should dare to make little Zillah look ten years older on paper by the collodion process. He didn't make love to her, because he was engaged to Miss Moydore, the banker's daughter; but he saluted her with a respectful and winning courtesy that made little Zillah crimson and tremble with pleasure whenever she met him, and he sent her bouquets from the conservatories at the Priory, and hoped to have the pleasure of seeing her there when he brought his bride home, like a gallant young English gentleman as he was. Old Captain Mumps, formerly of the Bengal Army, now of Chittagong Cottage, near Scaleywort, who had never been known to be civil to soul that breathed, told Doctor Quinington, when he consulted him for the fiftieth time about that tiresome old liver of his, that he thought he might be cured, if he were allowed to look at Miss Zillah for half-an-hour every day for a fortnight. This was taken as a great compliment, coming from Captain Mumps, the

bilious and surly. If little Zillah had been a little duchess instead of a country doctor's daughter, she could not have received a wider or more devoted homage at the hands of the town's people. To be sure, she was always tripping into poor people's cottages with medicines and comforts, and warm clothing and good books; to be sure, she was always scampering over the country-side on her little gray pony, with her black retriever "Brio" flouncing after her, and with a cheery good-morrow to all the hat-touching and curtseying folk she met; to be sure, she was a little fairy about her father's house, singing and dancing, and romping and hugging him; but she could be serious and devout enough at fitting seasons. You see, that an atmosphere of purity and goodness embosomed her, and challenged the love and respect of all. You see that to be so loved and respected, is to possess as safe a passport as that Irish young lady's, whose "kindly smile," we are assured by Mr. Thomas Moore, "lighted her safely through the green isle."

Zillah was not so very little, either. Not tall, she had as many inches as a pretty girl could reasonably desire; but "little Zillah" she had been called ever since childhood, and little Zillah she remained. I conscientiously believe that her only enemy on earth was a parrot belonging to Onderdonck, the retired master mariner from Rotterdam — what did he want settling at Shrimington? — a most depraved bird, purchased in Ratcliff Highway, London, at an enhanced price, owing to his profi-

ciency in bad language—who, whenever Doctor Quinington's pretty daughter passed, shrieked out "Zillar, ZILLAR! Go to bed, Zillah! Fie for shame, Zillah!" and other injurious phrases. There were many conspiracies to wring that parrot's neck; but Dirck van Onderdonk was a dangerous man, and he told Doctor Quinington's boy who carried out the medicines, one day, that if he caught any one—man, woman, or child—near the cage of "Stoffius," his parrot, he would "bide dere ards oud." And nobody cared to have his or her heart bitten out by the terrible Dutchman.

It was a glittering day in January—a frosty, rimy day—when Nature, putting on a full *parure* of icicles, laughed Messrs. Hunt and Roskell, to say nothing of Mr. Hancock, temporarily to scorn, and little Zillah stood before her toilet-glass, occupied—shall the truth be told?—in "doing up her back hair." Such back hair it was, too! such front hair! such an avalanche of golden curls! These curls cast purple shadows; they were never confined by a night-cap, but wanted over the pillow luxuriantly; no frizzling tongs had ever been heard of in their vicinity; and their young possessor had a way of flinging them at you, so to speak, tossing them on one side with mischievous grace as she was teasing you, and manœuvring them in a generally delirium-producing manner. There were few scents and no cosmetics on little Zillah's dressing-table, a great bunch of lavender over the looking-glass, on the chest of drawers her Bible, the "Arabian

Nights," "Shakspeare," "Pickwick," "Lalla Rookh," and "Napoleon's Book of Fate"—Zillah was one little wee bit superstitious, though she laughed when she told her fortune by her dreams in the morning—a big *Hortus siccus*, full of flowers and plants, flattened or dissected, and a mysterious volume of vellum leaves, in which were inserted barbed hooks, and a quantity of weird, barbaric, gorgeous little figments made of silk and many-coloured feathers, and gold and silver thread. I am sorry to impute anything like a tendency towards masculine amusements to my little Zillah, but justice compels me to admit that she was, from the Thames to the Tweed, almost unrivalled in the manufacture of salmon flies. I think it exceedingly probable that she never saw a live salmon, little Zillah; but fly-making is an art whose mastery is innate, like poetry, colouring cutty pipes, and playing the fiddle. Zillah was renowned in the angling world for her flies, and kept her uncle James, who was a supervisor at Musselburgh, N.B., and an enthusiastic salmon-fisher, constantly supplied.

Little Zillah's bed, with the white dimity curtains—But goodness gracious, sir, what business have you in a young lady's sleeping apartment? I say that those white dimity curtains, which had rose-coloured bows—Go down stairs directly, sir. I wout go; though learned, chatty, simple-minded Doctor Quinington is waiting breakfast for me, and for you too, Zillah, till I have satisfied myself of the truth of what I had already conjectured—



that Zillah is not coming down in her plain morning wrapper, but that she has put on one of her best frocks. She always would call them frocks: never "gowns," nor "dresses." Yes; and on her young breast—that heaves as yet, thank Heaven, with no one bitter emotion—she wears a brooch set in gold, with the Colosseum at Rome done in mosaic in its frame; and round her neck she wears a slender chain, whose ultimate goal, near her kind heart, is a locket, with a daguerreotype portrait of a thoughtful young man with spectacles. Aha! Little Zillah has not thus spruced herself up for nothing! But you need be under no apprehensions, form no rash conclusions, build no castles in the air. Little Zillah has been engaged for two whole years to Septimus Keene, who has been walking the London hospitals, and has come down for a few weeks' shooting over the Priory preserves. "Shoot every pheasant in the place, if you like, my dear doctor," wrote Mr. Gervoise; "and give the tails to Miss Zillah to make flies of." But that was only his politeness. The young squire could not mean that, you know—being a great sportsman. Zillah was very fond of Septimus, though he was very short-sighted, and slightly sentimental, and very absent in mind. She called him her "goosey." In another year Septimus, who never did much execution among the pheasants, but liked the sport because it brought him near to Zillah—in another year Septimus would pass, and then he would settle at Shrimpington, and be married: perhaps become medical

officer to the Boo Union. Old Lieutenant Keene, of the coast-guard, Septimus's father, had his station in convenient proximity at Cockleham Bay, some ten miles' distance on the coast, south. A very limited horizon was this for little Zillah; but it was a horizon all of gold.

It is really very absurd; it is positively ludicrous! I can't expect you to believe such an out-of-the-way, such a preposterous thing; but I tell you the story as it was told to me, and I warned you in the outset that you must take it *cum grano salis*, with a grain of salt. Just as little Zillah was turning to quit the room, she heard a feeble, furtive little tapping at the glass of the casement. She opened it, pushed aside the screen of frosted evergreens that half veiled the window, and looked out. She could see nothing at first to account for the tapping, till her eyes travelled to the sill, and there was a poor little Robin Redbreast, his scarlet waistcoat looking very dingy in the brilliant snow, his head drooping, his body supported on only one leg, and looking altogether like a Robin Redbreast in very serious difficulties. It must be premised that little Zillah was a fast friend and firm ally of all birds, and especially robins; and when the wintry weather came, there were always crumbs strewed upon that casement-sill. She thought that she recognised this particular robin as a somewhat humorous gentleman, who, after he had had his breakfast, was in the habit of staring quite impudently through the window, watching her whilst

she laced her stays. Or perhaps he was that haughty robin of the dainty turn, who turned up his beak at brown bread, and came last Tuesday. Be it as it may, this robin seemed neither humorous nor hungry now. His feathers were all ruffled, and a little channel of crystallised salt shone on that space between his beak and his neck, which, by a stretch of literary license, I presume I may call his cheek, on either side. He was more than lame, and more than sick. Poor Robin Redbreast had broken his leg.

Some say that he had only got a prickle from a thorn between his claws, which little Zillah extracted. Others, that the injury was only a sprain, and that Zillah bathed it in warm water. Others, that it was his thigh that was lacerated, and that Zillah bound it up with a linen-rag. But I adhere to the Legend of the Leg; and I tell you, although I don't for one moment expect you to believe me, that Zillah not only put hot water and linen-rag in requisition, but that she set the fractured limb and fortified it with splinters, either through an intuitive knowledge of the clinical art, or through some sly study of the big books in her father's library. I have *some* conscience about me; or I would tell you that little Zillah put Robin Redbreast to bed, and tended him through the fever that ensued upon his accident.

I really think I had better leave off. I am sorry I began this story. It is too absurd. But then I am not responsible for it. I didn't invent it. The

Shrimpton people are prepared to take affidavits as to its truth, and I have heard it from the most respectable authorities.

I suppose you wont break out into a sneer of incredulity when I tell you that twelve months after the apparition of Robin Redbreast with his broken leg—he did not put in an appearance during the year, and my pet ascribed his absence to the ingratitude of bird-kind, inconstant volatiles, all “warble, flutter, and fly-away”—Zillah Quinington became Zillah Keene. Her affianced one had passed with entire satisfaction to himself and his superiors. He had won prizes, too, during the year, and brought home a store of morocco-bound volumes, full of a hash of cloudy English and musty Latin, and all about medicine; emblazoned with gorgeous coats of arms in gold upon the covers. He had won fame, too—positively fame; and had rendered signal service in an emergency at the hospital to which he was attached, in the case of an inebriated Lascar crossing-sweeper, who had jammed one of his legs between the bars of an area-grating. Squire Gervoise had presented Mr. Keene with a case of surgical instruments, splendidly mounted in silver and mother-o’-pearl; and had promised to use his best influence with the guardians of the Boo Union, whenever there was a vacancy for a medical officer. A neat little house had been taken for the young couple—one of the new houses that Squire Gervoise had built, Scaleywort way; and Dr. Quinington had insisted on presenting



them with the immense phrenological head which was wont to stand on a pedestal in his own study. The old man was glad they would live near him. He would have broken his heart if his darling had gone quite away.

It was her bridal morning; in the winter; ay, and Zillah stood for the last time in her little chamber. Good-bye, little white bed with the dimity curtains tied up with rosy bows! I may glance at you now. Never more shall you be pressed by that fair and pure young form! Good-bye, casement shaded with evergreens! Good-bye! —Why, what was that? As I live, another tapping at the window-pane!

I am bold in my asseveration this time; for Miss PIPPS, the senior bridesmaid, heard it as well as Zillah. Miss PIPPS came of a highly respectable family. Her father was a guardian. Her mother was a Chicksand (of Bedfordshire). Surely Miss PIPPS is worthy of credence. Zillah flew to the casement: her heart beat all pit-a-pat, for she seemed to recognise the tapping as familiar. She looked upon the sill, and lo and behold! *there was poor Robin Redbreast.* But he was no longer the disconsolate bird of twelve months since. He had grown stout. His beadlike eye twinkled. His waistcoat was like that of a beadle, minus the gold lace; and he had a confident chirrup. He had come to pass the time of the day, and to pay the compliments of the season; and he was not alone, this bold bird. No, not alone; a modest little

brown thing nestled by his side, and he led her forward, as it were, by the wing, with a scrape of the leg—the mended one—and a bob of the head on his own part. 'Twas *Jane Wren, his wife*; and the two were come to bid little Zillah God-speed in her life's journey.

One more appearance was poor Robin Redbreast destined to make. A pleasant little banshee, he only appeared at the window when there were "tidings of comfort and joy" abroad. He had to stop away this time the better part of a year. Perhaps he had other casements to call at.

I knew it; I was persuaded of it; I always said it. They were exactly the young couple to have them. It made a tremendous ado in the town; congratulations poured in on Mr. and Mrs. Keene. Squire Gervoise (now himself married to *such* a rich, tall, banker's daughter—*so* tall, *so* blue, *so* High Church) sent his compliments and a handsome silver caudle-cup. Old Mr. Prawnby in the High Street cracked his jokes, and said that he ought to have charged double for the wedding-ring. Twins! I always prophesied twins: two lovely little girls.

Now you can't doubt this, ye sceptics! Like the individual who pointed to the "identical brick in the chimney" to prove that the house he lived in had once been inhabited by Jack Cade, I refer you triumphantly to the "Times" newspaper of January 1850, where you will find among the "births" this announcement:—"At Celsus cottage, Shrimping-

ton-super-Mare, Mrs. Septimus Keene, of twins—girls." Have ye any doubts respecting poor Robin Redbreast now, O unbelievers?

The twins and their mamma had done wonderfully well, and at the expiration of a fortnight there was a ceremony gone through at Celsus Cottage, very pleasant and delightful to witness. Little Zillah—she was always little Zillah—"came down stairs." No, she did not exactly descend of herself, for, to tell the truth, she was carried down two flights in her husband's arms, she laughing all the way, and declaring that she was quite strong. They set her in a great arm-chair in the keeping-room, propped her up with pillows, bade her not excite herself, tried to make her an invalid; but little Zillah's merriment was not to be subdued, and she soon had a laughing circle round her.

When there came a slight, but very confident, tapping at the window pane.

"The Robin! the Robin!" cried little Zillah, clapping her hands. "Oh, dear papa! Oh, 'goosey,' dear, the Robin! Open the window, some one, pray!"

They opened the window very cautiously, for fear of giving the pretty convalescent cold; and there, blazing in the snow, with apparently a new scarlet waistcoat donned expressly for the occasion, was that incorrigible, that shameless, that abandoned Robin Redbreast. Ah! say not so: the grateful little bird had but come to pay his yearly homage to his fair mistress. Not alone, either,

poor Robin Redbreast. At his side was Jenny Wren, his wife, and by *her* side—don't laugh, don't tear this sheet to ribbons—*were two glossy, diminutive little birds, just fledged*, Robin's Twins!

I think I had better emigrate after this. I can't show my face in society after this exposure of absurdity. It would be as well, perhaps, to retire to a monastery till this unpleasant affair has blown over. No, I won't! I will be as confident as poor Robin Redbreast. I plead Christmas in extenuation. It is only once a year. It is good to be childish sometimes: so take my story for once with ever so liberal a pinch of salt. And, again, I ask, "Why not? Why shouldn't the story be true?" Didn't those large-hearted feathered little fellows cover the Children in the Wood with leaves? Isn't there the ballad of the Norfolk Tragedy and the Cruel Uncle to bear me out? So here, say I, is health, and here too happiness, to all young couples, and a short shrift to the curmudgeon who would kill a Robin.



## Under the Pillars.

SIMON STYLITES lived at the top of a pillar ; but the hermits of whom I am about to treat live under the Pillars, and round about them, and within their shadow, as you shall hear.

The Pillars are not ancient, although they are black and smoky, and dingy enough to have belonged to the very darkest of ages. Nor are they, it must be imagined, at all picturesque, albeit they form an entrance to one of London's most ancient and most curious localities. The Pillars, indeed, give ingress to Shallow's Inn, one of the most renowned Inns of Chancery. Here it was that a relative of the Founder once sojourned ; no other than Robert Shallow, Esquire, of Gloucestershire, and subsequently of Windsor, in the county of Berks, Justice of the Peace, and *coram*—"Ay, Cousin Slender, and *cust-alorum* ; ay, and *ratorum* too ; and a gentleman born, master parson ; who writes himself *armigero* in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation—*armigero*, and had done, any time these three hundred years." It must be remembered that Robert Shallow, Esquire, flourished

so long ago as the reigns of Henry the Fourth and Fifth, and that all his ancestors had borne the dozen white luses in their coat, so that you may well form an idea of the antiquity of the Shallow family. I know not at what time it occurred to a Shallow to found an Inn of Chancery; but he must have done so many years before Robert his descendant came to live here, a student of the law. He was called "lusty Shallow" then; according to his Cousin Silence, and "mad Shallow," according to his own showing; and there, in Shallow's Inn was he, and little John Doit of Staffordshire, and black George Bare, and Francis Pickbone, and Will Squele a Cotswold man—the four greatest swinge-bucklers of the Inns of court. This is the Shallow that fought with Sampson Stockfish, a fruiterer, behind Gray's Inn, the very same day that the famous Sir John Falstaff, when he was no higher than a crack, broke Skogan's head—a big man, Skogan—at the court gate. This is the Shallow who lay all night in the windmill in St. George's Fields, who often heard the chimes at midnight, who knew Jane Night-work and all the *bona robas*, and whose watchword with his comrades was "Hem! boys." This is the Shallow who mixed in the sports (when lying at Shallow's Inn) at Mile-End Green, and was Sir Dagonet in Arthur's show. I am afraid, though, that Shallow's Inn was not the only place wherein Master Shallow did lie; for by his friend Sir John's account he was not, in reality, half the famous

fellow he made himself out to be. Indeed, he seems to have been less "lusty Shallow" and "mad Shallow" the swinge-buckler, than "a man made after supper with a cheese-paring"—a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife—the very genius of famine, a man who might have been trussed, he and all his apparel, into an eel-skin; for the case of a hautboy would have been a mansion to him, at the time when John of Gaunt—"time-honoured Lancaster"—burst his head in the Tilt Yard for crowding among the marshal's men. And Lord, Lord, how subject we old men are to this vice of lying—to say nothing of the middle-aged men, and the young, and the ladies.

At all events 'twas Shallow's fore-elder who founded the Inn under the pillars. "The Inn was so called," writes old Stow, "because it stands close to the church of St. Clara-under-Shallows, but nearer to the fair fountain called Shallow's well." How long before the reign of Edward IV. it had been occupied by students of the law—I paraphrase another learned authority, Mr. Howard Staunton—is not known; but we have Strype's testimony, to show that hereabout, and in the parts adjacent, were frequent disturbances by reason of unthrifths of the Inns of Chancery, who were so unruly that the inhabitants had to keep night-watches; and in the year 1582, the Recorder himself, with six more of the honest inhabitants, stood by the church of

St. Clara-under-Shallows to see the lanthorn hung out, and to observe if he could meet with any more of these outrageous dealers. This was in the time of Queen Bess; only imagine the Recorder of London coming down in the reign of Queen Victoria to see the lanthorn hung out, and peer scrutinisingly for the "outrageous dealers" of Shallow's Inn. It is odd, however, to mark that this same lanthorn is yet upon occasions hung out, especially on wintry Sunday afternoons, when a barricade is erected on the north side of St. Clara's churchyard, close to the Pillars, to prevent the service in the church being disturbed, not by "outrageous dealers," but by passing cabs and omnibuses, and a lanthorn is attached to the barrier as a warning and pharos, lest rapid Hansoms should come to grief on the shoal of ropes and stakes.

Now, all this does not help the question as to who Shallow was; the original Founder who took his ease in his Inn. After all, does it much matter who was Staple, who was Clifford, who was Thavies, who was Barnard, who Gray, who Lincoln, who Lyon—who all the rest of Inns of Court and Inns of Chancery founders? Erudite men—groping antiquarians—English Dryasdusts—may discover, or think they have discovered, and tell us; but does it matter, after we have been told, who was Bellamy, who Arthur, who Garraway, who Sontack, who all the Sams and Toms and Joes and Sallies and Jonathans that have given



their names to taverns and coffee-houses any time these two centuries? Of course I could turn up chapter and verse, and give you all their biographies; but *cui bono*? They are dead, and will eat no more bread, drink no more sack, and chalk up no more scores. Let us leave them in peace, and go back to the Pillars.

Under those Pillars have I stood, and lounged and wondered, and sheltered myself from the rain for many years; and knew and liked their darkling shadow long before I became a tenant of the Inn. It is an Inn of mystery. I met a friend once, under the Pillars, who asked me whither I was bound; I answered that I occupied chambers close by. "Whose name have you got on the door?" he asked. "Whose name! why my own, to be sure," I answered. "That's very imprudent," he remarked, shaking his head. "Nobody in Shallow's Inn, under fifty, has his real name up." But I am of opinion that my friend libelled the things under the Pillars.

There used, in my young days, to be a kind of daily fair held under the Pillars—a Fair minus, certainly, a dwarf, or a giant, or Richardson's show, or Algar's booth, or Wombwell's menagerie, or an armadillo, or a spotted girl, or a pig-faced lady, but still a Fair very diversified and very amusing, a pen, so to speak, of vagabond Bartlemy Fair life, transplanted, bodily, out of Bartlemy. There is a little shop and house environed court-yard between

the Pillars and the gates of Shallow's Inn proper. This court-yard, or *parvis*, was at times not a bad representative of the Cour des Miracles, the pur-lieu of a minor racecourse, and the aforesaid pen of Bohemianism transplanted from Bartlemy. For here, until driven out by the stern beadies of the Inn, came the proprietors of peepshows, showing for a penny to adults, and for a half-penny—and in hard times even a farthing—to juveniles, strangely coloured panoramas of the Battle of Waterloo: the Duke of Wellington, Marshal Blucher, and the Emperor Napoleon Boneypartey being all depicted on thorough-bred chargers, and the spectator who had paid his money being entitled to take his choice as to which was Wellington, and which Blucher, and which the invisible Boneypartey. There are no peepshows worth looking at now-a-days. Do you know why? The boys have an abundance of gratuitous peeping through the lenses of the stereoscopes so obligingly exhibited in the windows of the opticians. Is it likely that they will care for vile daubs of the Battle of Waterloo displayed for money, when they can gaze for nothing at those wonderful realities that bring Switzerland and Venice, China and Egypt, palpably and distinctly before them?

To the peepshows there were added many a juggler with his cup and balls and goblets; many a quack in semi-Turkish costume selling anti-consumption lozenges, and infallible preparations for taking out grease spots. I wonder whether the

dromedary ever came under the Pillars to exhibit his hump to the wondering inhabitants. I wonder whether the dancing bear ever went through his melancholy movements on the stones of that little courtyard—stones that in summer time were as hot as must have been the iron plates on which the legends of my infancy recorded that bears were taught to dance. Monkeys in plenty I have seen there; and there is one intelligent ape who still frequents the Pillars—the old, old monkey who fences with his proprietor, sweeps the tripod on which he is mounted with a little broom, fires off a mimic rifle, shakes hands, cracks nuts, takes off his cap and bows, makes faces, shows his teeth, and otherwise behaves like a rational being. Ahasuerus of monkeys! Wandering Jew with a prehensile tail! You see him everywhere. Now at Chester races, and now on Brighton cliff; now on Westmoreland falls, and now at Cowes, in the Isle of Wight. He seems as ubiquitous as the man who has sold and cried “brandy balls” for a time, the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. Where does he live when he is at home, this venerable monkey? Where does he hail from? Came he originally from Barbary with the sanguinary Kirke and his “lambs?” Or did Lord Heathfield bring him home from Gibraltar, that Parnassus of the simious race, after the siege? Or was he a speculation of the observant publican, Mr. Edward Ward, of “London Spy renown,” returning, in the reign of Queen Anne,

from "ape and monkey climes?" It is my firm opinion that the accomplished ape is as old as the Chevalier de St. Germain pretended to be, and that he knows a great deal more about the history of civilization than Mr. Buckle, or than he, the monkey, cares to tell.

Organ-grinders come beneath the Pillars from time to time; so does that dilapidated man with lean legs disguised as a Scottish Highlander, and lamentably droning on a pair of wheezy bagpipes, while at his side there capers lugubriously, with an inexpressibly mournful, haggard, weazened, prematurely old little countenance, a diminutive girl, the daughter I presume of the sham Highlander, and accoutred like him, in dingy bonnet, and tartan kilt, and half-stockinged legs. Ah! these mountebanks; and how I should rejoice in writing a folio volume, abundantly illustrated by George Cruikshank, Leech, and Phiz, about them and their ways. Music has always had charms to soothe the breasts of the denizens of the court under the Pillars,—the more so as those breasts have no appearance of being savage. Savage, indeed! There are four of the prettiest and most amiable young ladies (I never spoke to but one of them) that can be found in London residing there at this moment. They come to the doors and windows, and listen—they and their infantile connexions—with the greatest glee to the music. It likes me not, however. I have a horror of Ethiopian serenaders, and they



swarm under the Pillars. Confound them and their sooty faces, that look so frightfully grimy and greasy in hot weather. I shudder at those Welsh wigs dyed in ink that they wear in lieu of the negro's natural wool. I hold in abhorrence their battered white hats, their preposterous shirt collars and cravats, their abnormal eye-glasses, their banjos, their bones, and their hideous chants. No, sirrahs, I have no wish to consort on a second-floor with Nancy, "in the Strand—the Strand,"—no, rogues, you shall not see me at the window. No, knaves, I am *not* bound to ride all night, or to ride all day, to bet all my money, or lose it, on any bob-tailed mares or grey horses, with a dooda, dooda, da. Oh! for an hour of despotism, that I might have all these precious Africans put under the pump, scrubbed clean, set in the stocks to dry, scourged, clad in hodden grey, and swiftly conveyed to a place of tribulation and repentance, where there are stones to break instead of bones to rattle, where there is oakum to pick instead of banjo-strings to strum. It appears to me in the highest degree scandalous and indecent that a Christian man with a white skin, and who can express himself with more or less grammatical correctness in the Anglo-Saxon tongue, should willingly and of malice aforethought blacken his face and hands with "Day and Martin's sootpots," as Mr. Carlyle has it, assume a garb which seems to have been half raked out of the kennels of Philadelphia and the niggers' dram shops of the Five

Points at New York, and half from the property-room of a theatre devoted to the offscourings of some bygone pantomime, and, armed with the musical instruments of pagan savages, repair to a place of public resort, and there, for hire and gain, howl forth by the hour together outrageous screeds of dissonant cacophony, with words couched in a hideous jargon that Bosjesmen would be ashamed of, and baboons disdain to imitate. If there be one thing worse than the uncouthly grotesque ribaldry of these serenaders, it is their wretched simulation of pathos. These fellows prance and yell in public thoroughfares, and are rewarded with coppers by the unthinking and the vulgar. But, bad as they are, they are not, by any means, the worst of their kind. There are niggers and niggers, serenaders and serenaders. There are other drolls—I use the term in its most offensive Gallic sense, *des drôles*—who equally blacken and bedaub themselves, but are clad in garments of somewhat superior fashion and texture, who hire concert rooms, lecture halls, and theatres, even, that should be devoted to the performance of the regular drama; and, amid the applause of refined and aristocratic audiences, howl forth the ribaldry and whine out the same sham pathos that afterwards descends, to be thrice coarsened and thrice burlesqued, into the courts and alleys of London.

Good lackaday! what long paragraphs and tempestuous verbiage a fit of virtuous indignation

brings one into. But it is not wholly futile. If not the *sæva indignatio*, it is at least honest and earnestly-meant bile. They *are* a nuisance, these pretended negroes. They are a libel upon our civilisation. They *are* a reproach to education and to progress. Sham mediævalism, sham classicism, may be borne; but it is intolerable to see men whose faces are white copy the manners and mimic the antics of filthy savages, or worse, of debased helots. If there must be nigger melodies and nigger melodists, let them be confined to the barracoons of the slave coast, or the mud cabins of the King of Dahomey. They may amuse his Amazons; "Sally come up" may save some wretched Dahomean's head from coming off, and the dulcet strains of "Row, de Boatman, row," deter his sable and sanguinary majesty from holding any more "customary" festivals, with canoes that float in a lake of human gore.

And so, refreshed after a digression, as a Newfoundland dog after a cold bath, I come back immediately under the Pillars. Did I need any further refreshment I should find it here, for the Pillars have been, time out of mind, one of the most remarkable places in town for what I may call ambulatory refection. Here in the brave old days of yore, when "Brandyballs" was a beardless boy, and the intelligent ape a young monkey that had not yet seen the world, or taken lessons in fencing, you might have seen the tossing pieman

with his monotonous cry of "Here you are; toss or buy: up and win 'em." The boys were always up to toss, but alas! they seldom won the pies. I fear that many small urchins, entrusted by their loving parents with small moneys for the purchase of household needments, have on their return home undergone some visitations of penny cane or half-penny rods through having met that fatal pieman under the Pillars, and gambled away with him in the mad hope of obtaining impossible pies, that "change out" which they were instructed to bring so carefully home. The tossing pieman has disappeared from under the Pillars these many years; but I may remark, without a parenthesis, that an almost inconceivable amount of ill-treatment is suffered by the children of the poor, from their not bringing home the proper amount of money from the sum which has been confided to them. Of course, in cases of wilful and dishonest malversation, a child deserves some corrective as a warning against further embezzlement, but they are just as frequently punished for inadvertently losing a portion of the "change out," or for having been cheated out of it by a fraudulent chandler's shopkeeper, or robbed of it by a rascally child-stripper and professor of the "kinchin lay," as for any guilty speculation on their own part. The children of the poor can scarcely toddle before they are sent out to purchase beer or victuals. They can scarcely talk intelligibly before they are sent to the pawnbrokers; and it is to my



mind a cruel and a sinful thing to see a child of eight staggering under the weight of a baby, or two little atomies of girls toiling along with a big basket of linen between them.

Concerning the tossing pieman, I am *not* going to be virtuously indignant; for only last June, in this present year, I confess that, being in a merry mood, I tossed for nuts on Ascot Races—losing, I am glad to say, every toss, and imperilled, moreover, many halfpence into hopeless jeopardy at the enticing game of “Red, white, blue, feather and star.” I always put a feather on red, and it always came up star; or else I put twopence on blue, and it came up feather. So, having a beam big enough for one of Penn’s steam-engines in mine own eye, I will not inquire too narrowly into the particulars which compose the mote my brother may have in *his* organ of vision.

Under the Pillars, at this present writing, I find departed—cease to admire and deal with—the man who sold the hot kidney puddings: he is alluded to by Charles Dickens, in the “Sketches by Boz” with reference to the curious composition of his gravy, said to comprise equal parts of dirt, pepper, and hot water, and by poor Albert Smith, who touches upon him in connection with the Courier of St. Petersburg, who, in a flaming cartoon which became a transparency by night, and was gaily illuminated, was in the habit of riding six horses at once for one of the renal delicacies in question.

Kidney puddings have apparently lost their popularity among out-of-door gastronomes: there is a fashion in street edibles, as well as in street games, street songs, and street slang cries. Nor does the hot potato man make his appearance under the Pillars, even in the severest winter weather, so frequently as of yore. He comes, sometimes, it is true, to revisit the *cari lugh*, but it is in a furtive and despondent manner. Of old his can blazed in well-polished brass and scarlet paint. From his little steaming apparatus the vapour used to escape in rapid, panting, and woolly puffs. How he would expatiate over the size and farinaceous excellence of that "hog's food," as Cobbett called the homely, unpretending potato. "Like balls o' flour, sir," he was never tired of repeating to each customer. There was that peculiarity in his salt that it tasted like pepper, and of his pepper that it had a saline smack. Both have lost their savour. As for his butter, it was a fearful and wonderful compound which had never known Dorset, I fear—nay, nor Cork. He made it, I should imagine, from the milk of his own cow kept in a back yard somewhere in Lock's-fields, next door to a tallow-melter, and not far from a bone-boiler. It had a pleasant yellow look, however—a kind of nutritious dairymism; and I never see a railway porter cramming grease into the axle-box of a carriage without being reminded of the butter of the hot potato man. When he comes, now, under the Pillars, it is only

to exchange moody complaints on the hardness of the times and the degeneracy of the age with his still constant customers, the cabmen from the stand which skirts the railway of St. Clara-under-Shallows. Where are the days, he asks, or the nights, rather, when young West-end swells or Templars bent on diversion, would purchase half-a-crown's worth of hot taters—making him a present of the butter—with the sole purpose of pelting one another therewith in St. Clara's churchyard. Where are the City gents of graver gravity of life, who, returning eastward on cold January nights from the theatre, would purchase a couple of balls of flour, and walk with them, one in each hand, to keep them warm? And the cabmen keep him company in complaining. They sigh—no, they grunt rather—over those halcyon times ere Fitzroy dreamt of cab acts, when ninepence a mile was the minimum fare, when overcharge was not high treason, and abuse was looked upon as *levius plumâ, levius pulvere, levius ventres, levius muliere*, which is the lightest thing, I take it, known.

The hot eel soup, too! gone. The whilks, in their bath of pickle and their staring saucers. The cholera of 1849 hit them a fatal blow, and the Pillarians have ever since shunned them as unwholesome. In their stead, I find the "shallows" of peripatetic fishmongers, full in summer time of cheap lobsters, generally wanting one claw, and not unfrequently rendered heavier by water—not to



say sand. In summer, as in winter, the oyster-man, with his blue apron, his knife stuck in the board before him, and his vinegar cruet consisting of a ginger beer bottle with a perforated cork through which the acetous fermentation filters, fails not. Long after the chief dealers, the Quins, the Scotts, and the Rules—have remembered the dictum once quoted in a grave trial *in banco* by John Lord Campbell, that oysters are only good in the months which have an "er" in them, the large-shelled molluscs are to be seen grinning and winking at the passers-by from their stall under the Pillars. They are so big, that they seem to have been grown in four-post beds, and fed with quartern loaves instead of crumbs; nothing of course to be compared, in respect to size, to the American oysters, one of which is a man's dinner, while two are his death; but still huge fishy flaps that can hardly be swallowed, and *will* be bitten. I wonder where these out-of-season oysters come from, and who the people are who eat them.

It has always been my opinion that the decline in the demand for hot eel soup, kidney puddings, and baked potatoes, is due to the wholesale springing up of pie-shops, which establishments have lately taken to rosewood fittings, plate-glass and arabesque fittings; while the falling off in the fruit trade must be ascribed to the penny ice-shops. There is a gentleman with an Italian name, and an unmistakeably southern countenance, who has lately



announced himself as a purveyor of Neapolitan ices in a little shop in St. Clara's churchyard, close to the Pillars. He has nearly ruined the old woman who keeps the apple-stall. The boys throng to them, and spoon the frigid compound down their throats with delicious joy. It does not in the least matter what his ices are made of. So long as they are sweet enough and cold enough, the basis might be old boots. He has moreover seriously injured the ginger-beer barrow trade, for he sells "imperial pop"—or the frothy delusion which still goes by that time and Tom Ingoldsby honoured name; himself likewise dispensing lemonade, which you may see cool and golden in a great foreign looking *carafe*—bottle does not at all convey the idea of its appearance—surmounted by a whole lemon by way of stopper. There is something honest and unsophisticated in this assurance, that the beverage is really made of lemons and not of citric acid. It is a modest plea of "no deception," very composing in these adulterating days, and reminds me of a place with an unpronounceable name on the Volga in Russia, famous for that epicure-beloved fish—ah! Apicius—ah! Lucullus—you never travelled towards Nishni Novgorod—called the *Sterlet*. When you have ordered your dinner, the waiter brings you the fish alive and kicking in a plate, as evidence that you are really about to partake of sterlet. At the Ship and Turtle, in Leadenhall Street, a practice the precise converse of this pre-

vails ; for it is *after* you have fed that a solemn waiter takes you to the cellarage, and shows you a variety of "toads with the kivers on," as I have heard turtle called by light-minded men ; for the carapacious cutlet and soup giver should not be irreverently spoken of ; and O ! the deadly quarrels I have witnessed between a croupier at a public dinner, and a gluttonous neighbour, through his imagining that he has been shabbily treated in the way of green fat. I think that in the distribution of turtle a rule that reigns at the dinner-table of some lunatic asylums might be advantageously adopted. Every madman has a ration of half a pint of beer to his midday meal. The measures containing the beverage are filled to the brim, and are set in groups, corresponding to the number of crazy people in each mess, in the very corner of the table. Each madman forthwith clutches the glass or can nearest him : he is satisfied, and there is peace and harmony ; but very different would be the result if every man's half-pint were placed at his right or left hand. Lunatics are habitually jealous and suspicious ; and each demented guest would think that his portion was smaller than his neighbour's—which erroneous impression would lead to squabbling and ill blood, and perchance to mutual howling, biting, and tearing.

I think I have by this time exhausted the aspects of life visible under the Pillars. If you have any curiosity to know anything about Shallow's Inn

itself, and the people who dwell there, you may find and confer with me any day at my chambers, number three hundred and twenty-two, on the second floor. My name is not on the door; but that is no matter.

## In Exploded Magazine.

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SOME years, ten or a dozen ago, during the Repeal agitation conducted by the late Mr. O'Connell, an outburst of retrospective patriotism and poesy took place in a ballad furnished with the title, "Who fears to speak of 'Ninety-eight?" It was first published in a newspaper, and referred, I suppose, to the unhappy rebellion which in that year desolated the fairest portion of Ireland; but I have never read it, nor, beyond its title, have I anything more to do with it here. It awakens no partizan feelings within me, and might as well be the song of the Boyne Water, or the Shan Van Vaugh, Vinegar Hill, or Croppies lie down—intensely orange, or vividly green, for any effect it could have on my susceptibilities.

'Ninety-eight was not an *annus mirabilis*, although Nelson's great victory at Aboukir was won in its autumn. But every year was one of wonder then, and the age was one of marvels. Dynasties and thrones were being pounded up by the French armies like rotten bones in mortars. Wherever over the globe there were no wars, there were, at least, rumours of wars. And yet the world wagged, and the seasons came and went. There were as



many wet and sunny days under republics as there had been under monarchies—in anarchy as in tranquillity. The months brought their same tributes of fruit, or flower, or grain; and were the same months, though the calendar had been remodelled, and they were henceforth to be Fructidors, Thermidors, or Ventoses. And it was the same death that kings suffered on the scaffold and soldiers in the field that a poor shepherd or a servant maid suffers to-day, and that you and I may suffer to-morrow. Sleeves and hose may alter, but legs and arms remain the same. Hunger was hunger and thirst thirst in 'Ninety-eight as it is in 'Fifty-three.

The other day, rambling about I stumbled upon an odd volume of an old magazine for my favourite 'Ninety-eight. This was at a book-stall close to the Four Courts, Dublin; and I immediately became its possessor at the outlay of sevenpence sterling. The book-stall keeper, who was quite a Sir Charles Grandison of Bibliopoles, politely offered to send my purchase home for me, but I took it to my habitat myself, and revelled in 'Ninety-eight half that night.

I found my Mag to be in the hundred and third volume of its age, a very respectable antiquity even in 'Ninety-eight; and, had it lived to the present day, it would have been a very Methuselah among Mags; but the work went the way of all waste paper, I am afraid, years ago. I cannot pretend to give you any detailed description of its

contents ; for, as per title-page, they included letters, debates, antiquity, philosophy, mechanics, husbandry, gardening, fifteen more subjects, and "other arts and sciences," besides "an impartial account of books in several languages," the "state of learning in Europe," and the "new theatrical entertainments" of 'Ninety-eight. And mark that my Mag was only a half-year's volume, from June to December. So I will say very little about philosophy or husbandry, the state of European learning, and the new theatrical entertainments of 'Ninety-eight, merely culling as I go on what seems to me curious, principally among the domestic occurrences of my year, and which may interest even those who have no peculiar solicitude concerning 'Ninety-eight.

First, I found a frontispiece elegantly engraved on copperplate, representing a wood or bosky thicket, in which reposed a lady in the costume of Queen Elizabeth, but much handsomer ; behind her the poet Dante ; by her side a lady in a Grecian costume, name unknown ; and around her a lion, several sheep, and a rabbit. In the fore-ground a hideous dwarf in a fancy dress, whom I was uncertain whether to take for the fabulist Æsop or the Polish Count Borulawski, was presenting a laurel wreath to a gentleman in a full-bottomed wig, large cuffs, ruffles, shorts, and buckles, who seemed very anxious to get the wreath indeed, and was incited thereto by the poet Horace ; who egged him on with a large scroll, backed up by another gentle-

man, of whose person or dress nothing was visible but a very voluminous wig looming above his friend's shoulder, and was on that account perhaps intended as an allegory of Mr. Charles James Fox. On reference to my Mag for an explication of this engraving, I was informed that it was emblematic of Summer, and some lines from the Seasons followed the information; but, as I could not see what he of the wig and wig and ruffle had to do with summer and Queen Elizabeth, I considered it and passed it over as a mystery of 'Ninety-eight, to be solved by future study and research.

Mrs. Muscadine writes to the editor during June, complaining of the mania for volunteering. She bewails the fact that her husband, and all the husbands of her acquaintance, have now the same squareness of the shoulders to the body and the front, their heels are all in a line, and their thumbs are all as far back as the seams of their trousers. She complains that her husband's affections are completely alienated from her by the rival charm of one Brown Bess, and that at prayer time he calls out "front rank, kneel!" for all of which she rates the Duke of York heartily, but good-humouredly. I wonder whether the re-embodiment of the Militia, or the recollection of Chobham, will call forth any Mrs. Muscadines in 'Fifty-eight. Next I find a long biography of John Wilkes. Wilkes died in the year before. In addition to his biography, my Mag has this month a notice of Dr.

Farmer, the author of the Essay on the learning of Shakspeare, also deceased in 'Ninety-seven. In the House of Lords, on the 28th of March (my Mag only reports it in June), the Bishop of Rochester attributes the numerous applications for divorces, which have recently taken place in their lordships' House, to the Jacobinical principles which had been inculcated from France. In the House of Commons, on the third of April, on a motion for leave to bring in a bill for the abolition of the slave trade at a period to be specified, which had been moved by Mr. Wilberforce, there are eighty-three ayes, and eighty-seven noes—majority for the middle passage, the barracoons, the bilboes, and the cartwhip, four.

April the twenty-fifth, in a social little committee of ways and means, Mr. Pitt moves for a trifle of twelve millions eight hundred and fifty-seven thousand pounds sterling for the army. He states, pleasantly, that he thought last Christmas that ten millions or so might have done ; but that "into the particulars of that sum he will not now enter." Considerate, this, of the pilot that weathered the storm. To make things pleasant, he claps on, in the same cosy little committee, "the additional tax upon salt," and the "additional duty upon tea," and the "tax on armorial bearings," "which," says Mr. Pitt, "rests upon a principle exceedingly different," which in truth it does.

Three-fourths of this month's number of my Mag are occupied with a narrative of the events of the



Irish rebellion, and of the battle of Vinegar Hill. They belong to history.

On May the third the Whig Club dine together at the Freemasons' Tavern, London, Mr. Fox in the chair. They are all very merry, and Mr. Fox gives the "Sovereignty of the People" (the Habeas Corpus Act has just been suspended). The Duke of Norfolk, on his health being drunk, sensibly observes that, "where the people have no rights, the nobility have no privileges worth enjoying;" and the Duke of Bedford in a neat speech intimates that the meeting is respectable. Mr. Erskine is rather glum; and when his health is drunk, coupled with "Trial by Jury," he contents himself with merely thanking the company, telling them that they know the reason why he is silent. Whereupon Mr. Sheridan (indefatigable in the pursuit of a joke under difficulties, gets up and proposes, "Our absent friend, the Habeas Corpus;" at which it needs no very retrospective effort of second sight to see the bumpers tossed off, and hear them jingled lustily by the Whig Club.

The suspension of "our absent friend" authorises, on the first of June, the arrest by Townsend the Bow-street officer, of Mr. Agar, a barrister, Mr. Curran, (the son of the Curran), Mr. Stewart, and the Hon V. B. Lawless (now Lord Cloncurry, and still alive I think), all under the authority of the Duke of Portland's warrant on a charge of treasonable practices. Failing our "absent friend," justice, in the shape of Mr. Townsend, lays hold of

Mr. Lawless's French valet and of his papers. Mr. Lawless was taken in St. Alban's Place, Pall Mall,—that peaceful, shady, tranquill little thoroughfare, hard by the Opera Arcade, the Patmos of half-pay officers. 'Tis as difficult for me to fancy an arrest for high treason in St. Alban's Place as to picture the rotting skulls of Jacobites over Temple Bar ; yet both have been almost within the memory of man.

On the seventh of June three persons, named Reeves, Wilkinson, and Adams, are hanged in front of Newgate. All for forgery. My Mag says that this was "the most awful example of justice ever witnessed." Doubtless ; but the example, however awful, was not efficacious enough to prevent its repetition many many more times in 'Ninety-eight. On the eighth of June there is another awful example (though my Mag does not say so) on Penenden Heath, one O'Coigley being hanged for high treason, in carrying on an improper correspondence with the French.

The next day dies, in Newgate, Dublin, of his wounds, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, son of the Duke of Leinster. On the twenty-first of May a proclamation offering a thousand pounds reward for his capture had been issued. Through the treachery of a servant-girl the place of his retreat was made known. A Captain Ryan, Mr. Swan, a magistrate, and the well-known Major Sirr, went with three coaches and some soldiers, as privately as possible, to the house of one Murphy, a feather-dresser, in

Thomas-street. There they found Lord Edward lying on a bed, without his coat and shoes. He feigned, at first, to surrender; but a desperate struggle ensued, he being provided with a cut-and-thrust dagger. With this he gave Captain Ryan seven wounds between the collar and the waistband, and Swan, the justice, two. He was at last disabled by a pistol-shot from Major Sirr; overpowered, conducted to the castle, and thence to Newgate, where, as I have said, he died on the ninth of June. Captain Ryan died of his wounds two days before his prisoner. Major Sirr lived till within a short period of the present day. He was for many years one of the Dublin city magistrates, and sat in the Carriage Court to determine disputes and hear complaints against that eccentric race of beings, the Dublin car-drivers. He was of course cordially hated by all the cabbies. One Jehu, a most inveterate declarer of the thing which was not, on being remonstrated with by the Usher of the Court for tergiversation (to use a mild word) retorted, "Musha then! Cock him up with the truth! It's more than I ever told the likes of him!" Singularly enough, Major Sirr's last moments were spent among his enemies. He was taken mortally ill while riding in an inside car, and was scarcely carried from it before he died: it was even currently reported that he did actually die in the vehicle. A short time after his death a car-driver was summoned (or, as the carman calls it, "wrote by the polis") for stumping another whip, i. e.,

inveigling a fare away from him. "I wouldn't a minded his stumping me," said the complainant, "but didn't he call out, when the lady was getting into the kyar, that it was mine was the kyar that the black ould major died in? And one couldn't stand that, yer honour!"

In the month of July my Mag has great news from the Convict settlement at Botany Bay. Not the least curious among these is the notification of the appointment of the notorious George Barrington the pickpocket to be a peace-officer or superintendent of convicts—with a grant of thirty acres of land, and a warrant of emancipation. Barrington had rendered considerable service to the executive during a mutiny on the passage out, and since his arrival in the colony had behaved himself to the entire satisfaction of the authorities. I believe he died a magistrate, in easy circumstances, and universally respected.

But the most noteworthy item in this Antipodean budget, is the account of the opening of a theatre at Sydney; the manager (Mr. John Sparrow), the actors and actresses, and the majority of the audience being convicts. Of the men, Green, and of the women, Miss Davis, best deserved to be called actors. The first performance appropriately commenced with "The Fair Penitent," and on another occasion "The Revenge" and "The Hotel" were presented. The dresses were chiefly made by the company themselves; but some veteran costumes and properties from the York Theatre were among the best that made their



appearance. The motto of these histrionic exiles was modest and well chosen, being "We cannot command, but will endeavour to deserve success." I suppose that it was on this occasion that the celebrated prologue, the production of Mr. Barrington, was spoken, in which were to be found the appropriate lines :—

"True patriots we, for be it understood,  
We left our country for our country's good."

The authorities on licensing the undertaking gave the manager to understand that the slightest infraction of propriety would be visited by the banishment of the entire company to another settlement, there to work in chains. The coercive master-ship of the revels is somewhat akin to the theatrical discipline in use in the Italian provinces under Austrian yoke, where refractory tenors are not unfrequently threatened with the bastinado by the military commandant, and prima donnas in their sulks are marched off to the guard-house between two files of Croat Grenadiers. The principal drawback to the prosperity of the Sydney theatricals seems, according to my Mag. to have been the system of accepting at the doors, in lieu of the price of admission, as much flour, beef, or rum as the manager chose to consider an equivalent. It was feared that this would act like gambling, as an inducement to the convicts ; and more serious evil arose in the frequent losses of watches and money by the respectable portion of the audience during the perform-

ances, and in the advantage some of the worst of the fair penitents took of the absence of the inhabitants at the theatre to break into their houses, and rob them of their contents.

On the twenty-eighth of July my constant Mag returns to the "Awful Examples." Two gentlemen, barristers and brothers, Henry and John Sheares, are hanged and decapitated in Dublin for high treason. At the last moment an urgent appeal was made to the Government for mercy, were it even to one of the brothers, and with an offer on their parts to make ample confessions; but the Government replied, "That they had a full knowledge of everything that could come out in confession, and that the law must take its course." Which the law does.

July the twenty-first, William Whiley is flogged through the fleet at Portsmouth for mutiny on board her Majesty's ship Pluto. On the same day, Brian, for the same mutiny on board the same ship, is hanged at the yard-arm.

July the twenty-third, McCann is tried for high treason in Dublin, as being the author of some treasonable papers found in the house of Mr. Oliver Bond. He is found guilty, sentenced to death, and hanged on the nineteenth of August. On the twenty-sixth, Michael William Byrne is also tried for the same offence, and the jury, after five minutes' consideration, find him guilty. He is impenitent, and exclaims, "with a warm accompaniment of action," that "he glories in the event of his trial."

He is executed on the twenty-fifth of August. "Several other persons," adds my Mag, as if weary of particularizing examples, "have also been hanged for high treason during the present month."

On the thirty-first of July, the *Blenheim*, a whale ship, arrives at Hull from the Greenland seas. Passing Whitebooth Roads the *Nonsuch* and *Redoubt* men-of-war, guardships, fire several shot into her (as a species of welcome to England, home, and beauty, I presume), but without effect. Three boats are then manned and sent towards her, for the purpose of impressing the seamen of the *Blenheim*; but these opinionated mariners "agree to differ" from the men-of-war's men, and arming themselves with harpoons, Greenland knives, and spears, resolutely oppose their coming on board. The *Nautilus* sloop of war, having by this time joined the other two, also sends a boat, and fires more than thirty shot into her "with intent to bring her to," but without effect. A deadly struggle ensues; and the seamen of the whale ship fire a swivel, loaded with grape-shot, into the men-of-war's boats, and desperately wounded two men and an officer; and at last their opponents row off. One of the wounded men dies in the hospital the next night, and the life of another is despaired of; whereupon a coroner's jury sit on the body of the seaman deceased, and return a verdict of wilful murder against a person unknown. Meanwhile, the crew of the *Blenheim* have reached the shore and concealed themselves—none of them being wounded. I

wonder, if any one of them had been killed, and the same coroner's jury had sat on the corpse, what would have been the verdict upon *him*. I must not omit to state that, the day after this abominable affray, warrants are issued for the apprehension of such of the Blenheim's crew as had been identified by the crews of the men-of-war's boats. My Mag does not state if they are captured or not; but our friend the Habeas Corpus being still absent, I am not without misgiving for them if they are arrested.

On the second of August an event takes place with which most readers of the annals of the stage must be familiar. Mr. John Palmer, a favourite actor, while enacting the part of "The Stranger" in the Liverpool Theatre, drops down dead upon the stage. He is buried on the thirteenth, at Warton, near Liverpool, and on the tombstone (with questionable taste) are engraven these awfully significant words—

"There is another and a better world."

My Mag. to add to the vulgar horror of the catastrophe, states that these very words were the last he uttered on earth; but a reference to the text of "The Stranger" will show that the words in question are in the part of Mrs. Haller.

On the sixth of September my Mag chronicles the result of six informations heard before the magistrates at Bow Street, London, and laid by the Stamp Office against a Mr. Williams, for suffering, in his room in Old Round Court, Strand, sundry



persons to read the "Daily Advertizer" and other newspapers, for the consideration of one penny each. The offence being held to be clearly made out, Mr. Williams is convicted in the penalty of five pounds on each information; "which is certainly sufficient," sagely concludes my Mag, to "convince the proprietors of reading-rooms that newspapers must not be among the number of the publications which they suffer to be read for hire, or, as they call it (my Mag is ironical), admission money." From which it would appear likewise that even penny news-rooms have had their persecutions and their martyrs. Ludicrously and inconsistently enough my Mag in thus pleasantly recording Mr. Williams's malpractices, does so in an "Historical Chronicle," clearly news, and taxable accordingly, but of which the Stamp Office does not take the slightest notice.

On September eleventh, at six o'clock in the evening, the north-east bank of the New River bursts near Hornsey-house, and inundates a circuit of four miles of meadow land.

On the seventeenth September, Robert Ladbrook Troys is tried for forgery. Guilty—Death. On the same day John Collins is indicted at the instance of the Stamp Office for forging a plate to counterfeit the "two shilling hat stamps." The principal evidence against him is that of a Jew, Barnard Solomons, who acknowledges his having suffered about two years previously three months' imprisonment for coining counterfeit halfpence. For the forgery of the "two shilling hat stamps," the verdict

on John Collins is, Guilty—Death. The next day, the eighteenth, twenty-five men are tried on board the ship *Gladiator*, at Portsmouth, for mutiny. Nineteen are found Guilty—Death. Thirteen are executed; two are to have two hundred lashes; two one hundred; and one is acquitted. On the twentieth, Mr. Silvester, the common-serjeant at the Old Bailey, pronounces judgment (Death) upon ten men and four women. Twenty-six are to be transported, twenty-six imprisoned, and two whipped. And so from month to month 'Ninety-eight pursues the even tenor of its way. The "awful example" harvest is unvaryingly fruitful; but it would be wearisome to continue recording statistics of each hemp crop.

Mr. Sabatier, impressed with the prevalence of poverty and crime in 'Ninety-eight, attempts to elucidate their causes. One great cause of poverty, according to this gentleman, is in "buying of unprofitable food." "Tea and bread and butter," he says, "is a very unprofitable breakfast for working people." Cheese and porter are still worse. "The former of these have very little nourishment, and the latter is costly." Unfortunately, Mr. Sabatier does not point out the profitable food. A paramount cause of poverty is keeping a pig; "a pig, if it runs about, consumes time in looking after it; it frequently gets into the pound, and eats up the scraps of the family where there should be none; it occasions the boiling of victuals merely for the sake of the pot-liquor; and then this stunted, half-

starved creature must be fattened." I wonder that in Mr. Sabatier's virtuous indignation against the pig, he did not add, in aggravation of its crimes, that it squeaks in infancy and grunts when grown up, and that in feeding it puts its foot in the trough, quite ungenteelly. Giving children pence to buy tarts is, in Mr. Sabatier's eyes, a heinous offence, and invariably productive of poverty. He clenches his argument by a moral piece on the downfall of the eldest son of a peer, who was reduced by improvidence (beginning with penny tarts) to the sad necessity of enlisting as a common soldier.

The causes of crime, Mr. Sabatier ascribes, among others, to fixing the same punishment to different crimes, the greater of which has a tendency to conceal the lesser: To impunity as in unconditional pardon, or in commuting death into transportation: To the confinement of prisoners before trial in idleness and bad company: To allowing legal passages for escape: To proscribing a man's character by visible dismemberment, such as public whipping, the pillory, or the stocks: To legalizing, or rather not prohibiting, pawnbrokers "and other receivers:" To permitting profligate characters to fill the religious ministry: To non-residence and neglect of incumbents: To permitting mendicity: To suffering seditious to escape punishment: To allowing temptations to lie in the way of poor people, such as game and wood in forests: To the sale of spirituous liquors and lottery tickets: To levying high duties on foreign commodities, and thereby en-

couraging smuggling. Among a variety of notions eminently germane to 'Ninety-eight, Mr. Sabatier, as it will be seen, is in some respects many years in advance of it.

So I lay by my Mag for the present. Years hence, perhaps, our grandchildren may take up some exploded magazine for this present year; and, as they turn it cursorily over, wonder how such things, therein recorded, could ever have been. I sincerely trust, however, that little advanced as we may be, 'Fifty-three has not evinced any symptoms of retrogression towards 'Ninety-eight.



## Robson.

AMONG other *desiderata* of this humorous age—Truth, for instance, Honesty, Faith, and boots that will wear for two months—there are few of which we stand in such immediate need—few that we so earnestly desire—few that would be of such use and benefit to this electro-plated society of ours—as Men. A Man now-a-days is decidedly a far rarer item in natural history than a black swan. He is so rare, so difficult to be met with, that there seems to be a danger of his becoming fabulous, like the phoenix, or extinct like the dodo, or unique like that celebrated specimen of the Saurian species, the “Oozly bird,” one of which, and one only, came over, it is well known, in two ships. A friend of mine once told me that he had occasion to attempt the negotiation of a small loan of ready money from a substantial merchant in one of the wealthiest seaports in the north of England. He failed. “Sir,” said the man he would have borrowed from, striking at the same time a weighty cash-box with one hand, and jingling sovereigns in his trousers-pocket with the other, by way of giving force to his asseveration, “*There is no money in Hull.*” And there was not, in the way he meant it, although he was a town-

councillor, and had ships on the seas, and a coach to ride in, and was worth fifty thousand pounds. I use an analogous chain of reasoning when I say we are short of men in these latter days, although the population of London exceeds two millions, and new swarms of parish brats are born every day. We have cliques, coteries, "sets," "parties," "schools," "staffs," "circles," more or less, "well informed"—but no men. Clubbism has been carried to its fullest extent—a miserable, peddling Joint-stock *Société anonyme* system has pervaded every state and condition of life. It is intolerable. Give me a Man, even if he be a rogue. Let *Shylock* lend me ducats, instead of the Imperial Bill Discounting Company (provisionally registered). Let Mr. Bludyer review this article and flay me, rather than I should be anonymously sneered at by the men on the "Mudlark" literary journal. Give me one Aretino to libel me, rather than a hundred "good-natured people" to tell lies about me! Who would not rather hear one Abelard lecture, than be told what the University of Stinkomalee "set" think of literature and art? Give me Sylla sooner than the thirty tyrants! Let me black the Emperor Soulouque's boots, and have him alone to kick me, in preference to being a waiter at the Cut-and-come-again Club, with six hundred masters, all with a fractional property in my services, and a fractional privilege of bullying me. I should like to be a Man myself; but I am alive to the humiliating truth that many tailors possess a larger share of

individual humanity than I do. I am but one of so many "people," a member of certain "sets," a disciple of somebody's "school." I can't abuse my enemies, or love my friends, because they are or are not in "the same boat" with me. There would seem to be some little chance for a man to assert his manhood in this little "Train Band" of ours. We are a Republic, and do not hide our heads and hand-cunning under the anonymous and irresponsible "We;" but were we fourscore times Men, every single one of us, the public would not believe in our individuality. The Public (I hate that noun of quantity, signifying many fools) will persist in setting us down as so many "clever young men." I would much sooner write the poem of "The Lump of Dirt," than be thought clever. There is an idiot, I believe, who considers us to be a "fast set;" and I shudder for the time when the reviewer of some sporting newspaper will speak of us as "Groombridge's lot." Even Mr. Groombridge is not a Man. He is but a fraction of a firm, and one of the fathers of the "Row." There is too much of this: of Joint Stock Companies, cliques, sets, clubs, and corporations, with neither souls to be saved, nor bodies to be kicked. I would rather be alone, and as bare as a robin, than a tenth-part proprietor of Mr. Moses's wardrobe. Oh! for a tub, and to be Diogenes—yet that would serve my turn but little, for there are five hundred Diogenes now in London; they are as numerous as letter-writing Madame de Sévigné in Paris, or Prince Galitzins in Russia.

Very rarely, once in a way, wandering through this chattering, stereotyped, back-scratching, "caw me caw thee" *camaraderie* (we have no English equivalent for the term, or I would scorn the French) of a desert, we come upon a Man—a thing with a heart, and a hand, and feet, and brains—a man who can think, and talk, and act for himself—can go to the Deuce, if need be, for himself, without going to perdition because it is the fashion, or because the "Cut-and-come-again Club" go there too. I take true Thomas Carlyle to be a man; but I honestly declare that I know no other living writer who is entirely and independently manly. They have all, the great masters even, some skeleton conventionalities in their house, some reticence of honest assertion; they kiss their thumbs instead of the Book, and tell the truth, but half the truth, or something else besides the truth. I think that German poet, Heine—paralysed, bedridden, living corpse as he is—to be a Man, and a great one. I don't think it would be a bull to assert my belief that Miss Nightingale is a Man—every inch of her. Mr. Ruskin is a Man—but unfortunately he is a madman into the bargain. Mr. John Everett Millais has much that is genuinely manly in his composition. He only wants a few more summers to pass over his head, he only wants the nonsense knocked out of him by a wholesome course of sound, honest, unsparing abuse, and he will be a Man of Men.

Trust me, manhood is a most profitable invest-



ment. It is a capital thing to "go in" for; though, to be sure, many of us do set up for men, and are incontinently detected in grinning, nut-cracking, and hanging on to tree-boughs by our tails, like homely apes as we are. But the world will recognise a man when the genuine article is manifest. We tolerate, we obey, we laud, we crouch and quail before one of the most finished and disreputable scoundrels that this world perhaps has ever seen—that slowly cruel, torpidly ruthless, lethargically, logically abandoned Incarnation of Will—he who has understood the transmutation of metals so well as to change a golden sceptre into a rod of iron wherewith to rule forty millions of people: we cringe under his rod like hounds, and hail him Emperor, not for his name sake, he is a scandal to it—not because he is Porphyrogenitus, he is but heir to a kingdom of shreds and patches, and his very birth is doubtful—not for his antecedents, they are infamous—not for our confidence in his intentions, he is perjured—but for his manhood. He is a Man. He can say "Yo el Rey." He speaks his own speeches, and prescribes, and cheats, and tyrannizes not vicariously, but of himself. He is a sublime egotist and a great Man.

From the great king Agamemnon to a poor play actor: from one who writes himself Basileus by the "Grace of God, and the national will" (and his own), to MR. ROBSON, of the Royal Olympic Theatre, Wych Street, London, seems at first a transition as violent as from the sublime to the ridiculous—

Lombard Street to a china orange—Heliogabalus to Jack the painter—Aaron with his rod to Professor Anderson with his inexhaustible bottle. But on nearer examination I think it will be found that the player deserves as distinctive a place on the roll of Men as the emperor. I claim, and believe, and assert ROBSON to be a MAN—in his Art, I mean,—in private life (and I take this opportunity of mentioning that I have not the slightest personal acquaintance with him, and, to my knowledge, never met him with the paint off his face in my life) he is but one of so many stereotyped millions of tax-payers and readers of *The Times* newspaper. As an artist I recognise in him will, power, individuality, independence, originality, thought. He stands out alone; he has in his vocation no peers: no man's mantle—Bannister's, Dowton's, Shuter's, Emery's—has fallen upon him; but he has made a cloak for himself out of the rags and tatters of the lamentable dramatic cast-off clothes shop, and wears and keeps it right royally. *Guai a chi la tocca.* He transmits to us neither the traditions of Betterton, nor of Garrick, nor of anybody; but he will transmit to our own grandchildren the traditions of Robson. In a state of the drama utterly degraded and contemptible, (but not moribund: the drama is as deathless as the human passions it *should* portray,) he has made a name—a position. He has influence: he is an Institution. He is a Man, and so, adhering to the principle of speaking of a man as we find him, I, having found him, will now

speak of him. So come along, Mr. Robson, and be criticised.

We "go to see Robson," and that is perhaps one of the strongest evidences of his individuality. It can be said of scarcely any other actor of the present day. We don't go to see Mr. Benjamin Webster specially; but we drop in at half-price at the Adelphi Theatre: we remember the next day that in a particular piece we saw Mr. Webster act like the careful, painstaking, observant, conscientious, appreciative comedian as he is. We go to the Haymarket, and are amused by Compton's dryness and Buckstone's drollery; but to see them personally was not the only object of our visit. We went to see some farce by John Oxenford or Robert Brough, in which Buckstone and Compton were supposed to be very funny. People don't go to see Wright, at least I don't, seeing that I would prefer walking ten miles to avoid Mr. Wright altogether. I don't think that I am singular either in saying that I would rather witness the "Game of Speculation" (though the play is, indeed, but a bald translation of the inimitable "Mercadet") without Charles Mathews, than Charles Mathews without the "Game of Speculation." Mr. Alfred Wigan, again, is an accomplished actor, an excellent mimic, an always amusing foot-light companion; Mr. Emery is characteristic, picturesque, and always sensible; yet I would as soon go to Jericho as to Wych Street if Emery and Wigan were the only attractions of that unsavory thoroughfare. There

are men who tell you that they pay their guinea for an opera-stall specially to see Cerito. Don't believe them. Twenty shillings out of the score and one are paid for the half-hundred pair of legs in pink fleshings. I am sure no man in his senses would make a special pilgrimage to Oxford Street specially to see that vain little man, hard by the American Stores, who mistakes a plenitude of upholstery for archæological lore, an abundance of "supers" for a restitution of the text of Shakspeare, and fancies himself an actor because his father was famous. I did go to see "King Henry the Eighth," the other night, but I am not exaggerating when I state that I left the theatre in a state of foggy uncertainty as to the identity of the actor who has misrendered *Wolsey*; and to this hour I cannot make up my mind as to whether it was *Cardinal Cumpeius*, who was the diminutive thing with the hatchet face, or *Lord Sands*, who spoke as though he had a cold in his head.

Ent we go to see Robson. He is the attraction of the Olympic Theatre; to see him we brave the perils of Wych Street, and the carriages of the polite world set down with their horses' heads towards Temple Bar, and block up Drury Lane. "Seeing Robson" was one of the few London attractions that the editor of *The Times* (a clear-sighted man, though a dishonest one) could enumerate among the notable sights fit to be offered to the foreign visitor to London. It is as imperative to see Robson, as to see St. Paul's, or the Falls of



Niagara, or the "Elephant." I verily believe that if the Olympic were a barn, and Wych Street a sewer (it is not much better); if the stage were merely so many boards on tressels; if there were no better scenes than placards with "This is a chamber," "This is a forest," inscribed on them; if the audience had to stand up during the performance, and there were no better orchestra than a blind fiddler, or a boy with the bones; if Mr. Robson played *Richcraft* in the uniform of a captain in the guards—as Garrick played *Macbeth*—or in a waterproof siphonia, or in a sack, or (saving your presence) in a full suit of buff, the people would still crowd to see him, would still, from the highest to the lowest, throw up their caps, and cry "Io Robson! Evöe Robson!"

Why? The reason I think is simple and palpable. Why? Because to this man has been given an insight into the human heart, and the power of delineating human passions. He does not create—at least he ought not to attempt creation, for his efforts of unmitigated originality are simply midsummer madness; full of genius, but incoherent and oppressive as a night-mare—but it is his to seize, to demonstrate, to drag up from the depths of the soul the latent, seldom seen, more seldom understood, emotions that make up the sum of humanity. He is a *voyant*. He is the *Bodach Glas* of human character. All the petty meannesses, the crawling spite, the grovelling desires, the pettish caprices; all the spasms of malice, of envy, and of hatred; all

the insolence, the sarcasm, the anger, the impotent malevolence, the one's own heart-eating, the cunning, the hypocrisy, the transitions of misery and happiness, of supplication and refusal, of elation and depression, of sullenness and frenzy, of determination and irresolution ; all the howls of a wild beast pent up in a man's body ; all the little vestiges of human feeling sometimes evoked from the breast of a seeming tiger, lights and shades, sunshine and clouds, smiles and tears, the evil and the good, the rascally and the sublime, Robson is master of them all. When he acts, you see a Man before you often contemptible, often detestable, but always natural. But it is not a man in evening dress, with his hand on his heart, and "My dear fellow" on his rotten lips. Robson has many rivals in mere "character" parts : Wigan, Charles Mathews, Webster, Leigh Murray, are better mimes than he. Emery surpasses him in the art of dressing and playing a man with a wooden leg, or a man with a bald head, or a man in a passion, or in liquor. I don't think he would excel as a stage Irishman, or a stage Frenchman, or a stage Yorkshireman—though he would play all wonderfully. But he shows us the *man turned inside out*. He wears his soul on his sleeve. He shows us the inner life. He shows us not only Prometheus, but Prometheus's vulture-torn liver. He lets us behind the scenes of his heart. His words are not cloaks to conceal his thoughts : you divine the innermost thought, and the man's heart of hearts by his talk, in a gasp, a half-uttered ejacu-

lation, a smothered curse, a scream. His speech is translucent. The Man grand, paltry, noble, desirable, loveable, hateful, stands out before you, naked as a confession by Jean Jacques.

All this is done without ostentation, without effort, without apparent exertion of the means of art. The end comes before you suddenly, unexpectedly. He is not a Paganini fiddling on one string; you do not marvel because he can play the *Carnival de Venise* on a small-tooth comb, he rather reminds me of an Æolian harp played upon by the wind at its wild will. His physical qualifications are few. He is an agile dancer; he has a wonderful command of voice in pitch and intonation, and is a passable mimic; but his stature is small, his presence mean, his gait exaggerated, his face not in any way remarkable for expression. In *Falstaff's* ragged regiment he might have been counted as any other younger son of a younger brother, as "food for powder," and "good enough to fill a pit." In the street I have heard he looks like any other ordinary little man; in society he is modest and unassuming. Sitting opposite to him in the Olympic dress circle you might, were you ignorant of his antecedents, mistake him for a gentleman "engaged for general utility," or for the performance of the unpretending part known in theatrical *argot* of "*Charles his friend*." Suddenly you find yourself listening to a man possessed by a devil; you are riding through the air on a broomstick to a witch's Sabbath; a wild horse is running away with you;

you are plunged into a lake of burning mail; you have laughing-gas applied to your nostrils; you are in hysterics; you go mad; and it is only, after all, "Little Robson" playing an absurd part in a sorry burlesque by Mr. James Robinson Planché, "Rouge-croix Pursuivant at Arms."

This may be turgid fustian, and not criticism, but it is true. Go and see Robson in the "Discreet Princesses." In his antics and his caperings, his bellowings and chucklings, his monstrous gesticulations, his abrupt transitions of voice, his outrageous caricatures of vehemence, his simple buffoonery and "mugging"—in the midst of your convulsions of laughter at his most excellent fooling—there will suddenly come upon you a feeling sharp and thrilling as a galvanic shock, and very nearly akin to terror. There is method in the man's madness. All these uncouth gibes and mouthings, these nods and becks, *mean something*: you roar with laughter at a superlatively ridiculous ejaculation of "Mmps;" you suddenly find yourself shuddering. Is the man laughing at you, and himself, and all the world? Is he showing you a parti-coloured soul, as well as a parti-coloured body? Is this mountebank-seeming actor, in fine, incarnating for you, for a Christmas night's amusement, the *severa indignatio* of Swift, the *froide raillerie* of Voltaire, the sardonic merriment of Rabelais, overlaying bitter truths in gross buffoonery, dressing his satire in "*gros sel*," as Harmodius dressed his steel in myrtle? Little children read "Gulliver;" they reckon nothing of the mad



rage that tore Jonathan Swift's vitals while he read it, and what burning sneers lurk like adders in those seeming good-natured lies. Little children see Robson dance the Lancashire clog dance in the "Yellow Dwarf," and caricature Charles Kean's shins in the ghost scene in the "Three Princess's," but who shall say—Bah! am I to go to Wych Street for Symbolism? When Mr. Ruskin wrote "Modern Painters," it is said that Turner, glancing over the book, expressed his opinion that the writer was an Ass, and pretended to know a great deal more of his (Turner's) meaning in his pictures than he did himself. Why can't I take Mr. Robson for granted? He may be, after all, but an eccentric actor making use of the best means at his disposal for amusing a holiday audience; but of a surety he frightens me sometimes.

The first time I ever saw Robson was, I believe, under the management of Mr. Farren, in the character of *Shylock*, in a travestie of the "Merchant of Venice." He had played, I think, in a similar travestie of "Macbeth," previously. I have seen and admired him since then in almost every character he has attempted, from *Jem Baggs*, in the "Wandering Minstrel," to the "Blighted Being." It is my conviction that his last impersonation—that of *Prince Richeraft* in the "Discreet Princesses"—is as immeasurably the best I have yet seen him in, as the piece itself is unmistakeably the worst I ever witnessed. In deformity, Robson is always at home; but in the *Yellow Dwarf* he was cramped and fet-

tered by the supernatural nature of the part. He had merely to play a malevolent sprite—a mischievous little gnome—and he played it admirably; but it is in the man fiend that he excels: moral deformity is his forte. “Deformed persons,” we read in *THE Essays*, “are commonly even with nature; for as nature has done ill by them, so do they by nature, being for the most part (as the Scripture saith) ‘void of natural affection:’ and so they have their revenge of nature.” Thus writes the “greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind.” I do not suppose Mr. Robson to be a student of Bacon (I only quote him myself, because I came upon the passage accidentally in an odd volume I purchased for fourpence at a bookstall, and thought the words apposite); but he has assuredly, though perhaps unconsciously, justified the philosopher’s remarks. In *Richcraft* you see the unceasing longing to be “revenged on nature” for her ill-treatment; the life-long rage at his deformity, the fierce resolve to have change for the hump out of somebody—the abilities and energies perverted, to be able to retaliate on the world; the boldness of the wretch exposed to scorn; the industry in watching the weaknesses of others that he may have something to repay. The deformity pervades you everywhere without its being insisted on. It is scarcely apparent in his dress; but the heart is hunched, the soul squints, the mind is bow-legged, the feelings are wall-eyed, the passions high-shouldered.

There are some persons who aver and maintain

that Robson is properly a tragedian ; and that, because he is passionate, because he can be pathetic, he could sustain any one of the characters in the Shakspearian repertory. Such persons do not know what they are talking about. In the tragedian we expect (and I think need) artifice as well as art. The tragedian must be, to a certain extent, conventional, unreal, like his language. Men do not speak in blank verse, or in continual metaphor. In real life we want the "Mmps !" A man will scratch his head at a funeral, but it could not be tolerated if he were to do it in *Brutus*. A tragedian ought not to blow his nose even. *Hamlet* taking snuff would be preposterous ; but I think Mr. Robson would and must do all these things, and more, in a purely tragic character, or he would be painfully dull and lifeless. In the tragedian we expect and require the noble presence, the sonorous voice, the dignified gesture, the measured accent, the flowing robe. *King Lear* must go mad like a gentleman. *Brutus* must fall on his sword in a dignified manner ; Robson would make him skulk into a washhouse, and cut his weasand with a penknife. Robson, like Rembrandt, like Hogarth, shows you the realities of passion, of this poor, frail, ludicrous human nature, with its miserable necessities, its ignoble thoughts, its paltry desires. Rafaele paints you an altar-piece, a Jacob's Vision, or a Woman taken in Adultery, calm, grand, tranquil, sweet ; but Rembrandt or Hogarth give you a cow-boy sprawling in a sodden sleep, or a Dutch wanton blubbering be-

tween two old clothesmen. *They make their characters take snuff, and scratch their heads*, but how grand and terrible they are! How tragic they can be without being tragedians!

I think Robson could play *Shylock* (the real one), and I am sure he would give us a splendid notion of *Hamlet*. For I, for one at least, want a thoroughly new reading of this little-understood character. My private opinion of the Prince of Denmark is, that he was a great deal more mad than people imagined (if you were to know how mad *I* was there would be a commission *de lunatico* tomorrow); that he was devoured by the spleen; that he had behaved very badly to *Ophelia*; that he used to "mug" himself with cold gin-and-water; that he had the profoundest contempt for *Horatio*; that he was immensely vain, rather good-looking, and *that he had a club-foot*. I want Mr. Robson to show us such a *Hamlet the Dane* as this—hypochondriacal, capricious, pettish, misanthropic, soured, disappointed, tyrannical, selfish, depraved, yet with some noble aspirations, some godlike qualities. There was such a Prince of Denmark who died at Missolonghi thirty years ago.

So, with the strongest advice to Mr. Robson to undertake the study of *Hamlet*, I must lay down my pen and leave him. Little more advice I have to give him. I cannot recommend him to addict himself to book learning; it would not do him any good, I opine, and has brought some people to a pretty pass. Even poor Charles Kean might have



made a tolerable *Rosencrantz* by this time if he had not taken to reading Stowe. I cannot advise Robson to study his fellow-actors—he is immeasurably above them all. But let him continue his studies nevertheless. In courts and alleys, in hospitals, madhouses, and gaols, in law-courts, and pawnshops, and chapels-of-ease, in taprooms, parlours, and Belgravian drawing-rooms, he will find a never-failing store of things human to observe and study. Let him continue reading the *Book of Human Life*. On the stage, as it is, I know no man who has read it so fully and so well.

## The Last Crusader.

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RAFAELLE, the Angel-limner; Guido with his heavenward turned visages; the ghost—stalwart, grim, awful—of Michael Angelo Buonarrotti, pointing with a giant hand\* from the midst of the gemmed raiment and rich carnations of Sebastiano del Piombo; with these the grand old white-bearded man Tiziano Vecelli, so affectionately called by his countrymen *the Titian*, with hues as gorgeous as his own Venice. Such are my glorious company in one of the shabby suite of shabby rooms near Charing Cross, called (in a spirit of polite irony, I presume) the National Gallery. Shabby, paltry, in bad taste, miserably inefficient as these rooms may be for the purposes they were intended to fulfil, while I have these great masters of Art around me I can forgive and forget the ugly hive that holds so many sweets: the barn-like frontage, the mustard-pot dome, and pepper-box cupolas. I am not alone. The Grena-

\* It is a matter of historical tradition that the figures in Sebastiano del Piombo's great picture of the Raising of Lazarus were *drawn* by Michael Angelo, who wished to pit the Venetian painter against Raffaele, and, knowing the proficiency of Sebastiano as a colourist and his weakness as a draughtsman, designed his picture for him.

dier Barracks may be close behind me, with most unromantic fifing and drumming in the yard thereof, for ever calling discordant echoes from the purlieus of Leicester Square ; with inartistical-looking privates lolling out of monotonous windows, with doors jamb-studded by lance corporals returning from the fatigue duty of carrying home their better halves' baskets of newly-mangled linen. The neighbouring sky may be obscured by puffy steam issuing from the work-a-day baths and wash-houses. There may be little charity children, hard by, droning forth spelling-lessons in St. Martin's Schools. Sallow paupers may be uncomfortably stone-breaking, oakum-picking, bone-crushing, handmill-grinding, all in direct opposition to good taste and the advancement of the Fine Arts, in the inner yards of St. Martin's workhouse ; but I can condone all their commonplace delinquencies, and all the shortcomings of the locality, the *entourage*, the population, Cockspur Street with its hideous statue, St. Martin's Lane, the ginger-beer fountains, the post they have stuck Nelson on. *Here*, in the one pair front of the National Gallery, I can walk with the peacocks in the rainbow-marbled palace of Dido ; good Master Steenwyck my gentleman usher. I can bide under the trees with Pater *Æneas* in the storm. I can tremble when Lazarus rises, and weep when the Angel lifts His auburn tresses in pious Francia's canvas. I can fondle the little lamb that Saint John is leading in the desert, can wipe the moisture from the swimming eyes of the Gevartius of Vandyck,

can count the furrows in the forty per cent. face of Rembrandt's Jewish Rabbi.

But not for these is my admiration, sir, to-day. My frying-pan (to be vulgar) is for other fish. I am spell-bound by the canvasses of another painter, newly gone to his reward—taken too soon (though his years had come to those that can be counted but as labour and sorrow) from us and Art—whose birth and death were both of modern date; but who is surely as old a master as any of the Samsons of the brush—as any strong Gyas or strong Cloanthus of the easel and maulstick here present. Proximate to where Claude Loraine is toying with the Queen of Sheba, stands Joseph William Mallord Turner a-building of Carthage with bricks of gold and silver and jewels. And *that* builder against the Frenchman for any stake you like to mention!

Few of us there be but have laughed, long and loudly, at the monstrous splodges of colour the marvellous man sent of late years to the Royal Academy exhibitions, and bade us, authoritatively, reverence as pictures. What jokes we made? what humorous censures we passed upon those eccentric performances! *Now* that the Master is dead, the evil that he did lies buried with him. For all his faults, and eccentricities, and madneses (if you will), we will proudly and lovingly remember our Englishman as the greatest landscape-painter the world ever saw. Such, at least, be *my* remembrance of Joseph Turner, the barber's son, who was the Milton of his art—who painted the "Shipwreck" and the "Building



of Carthage"—who sleeps the great sound sleep now in the Cathedral Church of Saint Paul, but who lives and holds his own against all comers among the greatest of the ancient masters in our Gallery.

And, filling mine eyes with the building of Carthage, the nascent palaces, and growing terraces, and embryo fountains, I turn, in thought, from Carthage built to Carthage ruined. Musing upon the delended city, slowly, sadly rise before me the shadows of its greatness—visions of its magnificence, its decadence, its various fortunes and woes, its headlong fall, its utter erasure and blotting out from the roll of cities.

Stand, Pilgrim, on the summit of Byrsa, and gaze upon the ruins of Carthage, for it hath its ruins yet : yea, to this day, in spite of railroads and submarine telegraphs and tourists from Peckham Rye poking about the Levant in the steam-boats of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. The ruins of Carthage resembling those of Sparta : meagre in data, too shattered to confirm, too dilapidated to elucidate, they yet cover a considerable space. Gaze, Pilgrim (shading thine eyes from the hot African sun, though the year is not yet older than its second month), fig-trees and olive-trees spread forth their earliest leaves ; the haughty angelica, the scrolled acanthus, form tufts of verdure scattered among starred and shapeless masses—rocks almost—of feverish marble, that once were temples, palaces, columns, amphitheatres. Far away in the distance gaze upon the Isthmus, upon the

double sea, upon the hazy islands, upon smiling plains, blue lakes, and delicately rose-and-purpled mountains, upon fields, forests, ships, aqueducts, Moorish villages, Moslem hermitages, minarets, and the white houses of Tunis the whilom piratical. Silent as are these hot plains (for the sun is high in the heaven, and few Tunisians care to stir abroad in the day-heat), legions of shadows of the men and women who have lived their course of life in Carthage flit solemnly across the landscape: Dido, Sophonisba, and the noble spouse of Asdrubal; Hannibal and Marius; the Roman revenge, and the Carthaginian women weaving their hair into bow-strings. These broad Afric lands stand no need of sowing with dragons' teeth for an army of recollections to start up armed and appointed. Come the mailed men—the serried legions that fought at Scipio's bidding. Comes the shadow of Utica and of Cato's house. Alas! that it should be but a shadow! Capreae yet can show the ruins of the palace of Tiberius; but of Cato's dwelling there remains nor stock, nor stone, nor vestige. Come the days of the barbarians—come rapine and slaughter, and ruined houses and choked-up fountains—come the Vandals, the terrible Vandals; and, no less terrible though more polished, Belisarius and his Byzantine hordes. Come the cruel Moors with their Sultan, and where his horse's hoof has touched the earth there grows no more grass. Lastly comes, Pilgrim, ravening for Saracen blood, hot upon their track, Louis of France, called the Saint, the LAST

CRUSADER. An you would know how it sped with him in his last crusade, and how the Angel of Death struck him amid the ruins of Carthage, you shall hear in this my reverie.

In God's year 1269, Louis the Twelfth of France is no longer young. Cares of state and private sorrows, fierce wars and pious vigils, have combined, too, with years to enfeeble his health and bow his erst stalwart frame. He cannot sit his charger for any length of time. His two-handed sword and massive triangular shield are burdens to him. His casque weighs heavily on his brow. Wearisome are the strong shirt of mail, the massive greaves, and cuissons, and jamb-plates. Saint Louis grows old and weak. But his soul is strong, and yearns as vigorously as ever (piety prompting) for the redemption of the Holy Land from the miscreant Paynims. His will is now, in the November of his life, to go beyond sea once more, and do battle for the Cross. The great ones of the kingdom, haughty holders of ducal fiefs, mailed barons and belted knights, are summoned to Paris, and the King paints to them, in colours as vivid as he may, of the Christian woes in Palestine—of the perils of the Sepulchre and of the Holy Places. And not only of the dolours of Palestine, but of the Christians of that Egypt and of that Alexandria of which St. Cyril once was pastor—of that Africa in whose burning deserts good Saint Jerome awed the savage lions with the Word. And he declares his fixed resolution to go, armed, to succour his afflicted brethren in the East,

and to slaughter (parenthetically) those other brethren of his who wear turbans and scimitars. They are to be remorselessly extirpated—for the greater glory of Heaven. So saying, he takes the cross from the hands of the Pope's legate, and gives it to his two sons.

The ducal foffers, mailed barons, and belted knights take the cross also in great numbers, directly their lord the King has set the example. Piety becomes fashionable. Takes the cross a brother-king and king-brother of Louis, to wit, Charles of Sicily. Takes it furthermore Edward Longshanks, Prince Royal of England, with as little scruple as he will take Wales and Scotland some of these days. Takes it Gaston and Bearn, and the Kings of Navarre and Aragon. The fair dames of Europe, undaunted by the grim reports of Paynim fevers and Paynim swords, prepare to follow their lords. The lady of Poitiers, the Countess of Brittany, Jolande of Burgundy, Jeanne of Toulouse, Isabella of France, Amicia de Courtenay; youth and beauty of blood not royal—these quit the distaff—which queens are not too proud to handle in 1269—and follow their husbands beyond the salt sea. Their white hands are not satisfied with buckling on the armour, or lacing the morions, or knotting the scarves of their true knights. The taper fingers long to be unbuckling the armour-straps after victory—albeit, perchance, there shall be other work found, ere long, for the pretty digits: unguents and bandages to be prepared for the wounded; orisons to be



said, with clasped hands, for the souls of the dying.

Saint Louis makes his will. To Agnes, his youngest daughter, he leaves ten thousand francs as her wedding portion. \* To his Queen Margaret, he leaves four thousand francs. Then he appoints two Regents to rule over the kingdom during his absence: Mathew, Abbot of St. Denis, and Simon, Sire of Nesle. After which he will go take the oriflamme.

Now, the oriflamme, as you should know, is a standard of silk, attached to the end of a lance. Now its colours are "Samite vermillion, cut to the guise of a pennon, with three peaks, and having round it hoops of green silk." In times of peace, over the high altar in the abbey of Saint Denis, sheltering the tombs of the Kings of France; in times of war it is borne before them in the front of the battle, where the King's place should be. From the hands of Abbot Mathew Louis receives the sacred standard. At the same time they gird his loins with the *escarcelle* (a girdle), and put into his hand the *bourdon* (a stick), which are called the consolation and sign of journey. And the delivery of these is so ancient in the Frankish monarchy, that it is patent that Charlemagne sits on his throne in his tomb beneath the dome of Aix-la-Chapelle, girt with the golden girdle, and armed with the jewelled staff he was wont to carry in Italy.

The morrow, after praying at the tombs of the

martyrs, and placing his kingdom beneath the protection of the patron of France, he proceeds in great state and ceremony, but with bare feet (as also his two sons), from the Palais de Justice to the church of Nôtre Dame. The evening of the same day he leaves for Vincennes, where he bids adieu to his Queen Margaret, "gentle, good queen, full of great simplicity," says Robert of Sainceriaux; afterwards he quits for ever the old oaks of the forest of Vincennes, the venerable witnesses of his justice and of his virtue.

"Many and many a time," writes the good Sire de Joinville, "have I seen the holy king-man (*saint homme roy*) sitting at the foot of an oak in the wood of Vincennes, and making us all sit down over against him on the green grass; and all who had matters concerning which they desired speech with him, were suffered to address him without any serjeant or usher offering them hindrance. Many times, so, in the time that is gone, have I seen the good king come to his garden that is in Paris, vested in a coat of camlet, a surcoat of tîretaine without sleeves, a mantle above the black sandalette; and there have his carpet spread for us and for him to sit round about among the flowers, and there did despatch for his people, both high and low, as he did in the bygone at Vincennes."

There is a gloomy, gothic, silent, fever-stricken seaport down in the dusky South of France, called Aigues-mortes; and from here, on the 1st of July, in God's year 1270, Saint Louis sets sail—he and

his warriors, on his last crusade. Three schemes had been mooted in the King's councils: to disembark at Saint Jean-d'Acre; to attack Egypt; or to make a descent on Tunis; there being Paynims to be slaughtered, and Christian laurels to be won, at each of these three points. Unhappily, Saint Louis takes the last of the three courses, for a reason you are to hear.

Tunis is now governed by a prince whom Geoffry of Boileau and William of Nangis call Omar-el-Muley-Moztanca. The historians of the period do not state why this prince should have feigned a desire to embrace the Christian creed: but it is probable enough that having heard of the strong crusading armaments preparing in the ports of the Mediterranean, he thought it worth while to send ambassadors to the court of King Louis, flattering the holy king with hopes of an exemplary conversion, on his (Muley's) part illusive and improbable. This he has done on the King of France first taking up the cross—not knowing probably where the storm would fall. His deceit brings the storm right upon his own head; for King Louis, being in doubt as to the sincerity or hypocrisy of this Mussulman neophyte, resolves to unriddle the pious enigma with a solution of glaives and hauberks, and steers direct for Tunis to convert Muley, *bon gré* if he can, *mal gré* if he cannot.

Perhaps a little political reason lurking beneath this pious resolve: The Tunisians have infested the

seas for years ; their rovers intercept the succours that are sent to the Christian princes in Palestine ; they furnish neighing steeds, bright weapons, and strong soldiers to the Sultans of Egypt ; there are the centres of the intrigues that Boudoc-Dari keeps up with the Moors of Morocco and the Moors of Spain. So that, besides his anxiety for Holy Cross, Saint Louis *may* wish to clear out a nest of pirates and brigands.

Saint Louis sails gallantly into the Bay of Tunis at the end of July. About this time a Moorish prince has undertaken the task of rebuilding Carthage ; some new houses already begin to show their heads among the blocks of ruins, a freshly-built castle crowns the summit of the hill of Byrsa. The crusaders are struck by the beauty of the country, covered as it is for miles with olive trees. Omar-el-Muley's conversion has already vanished into air. To the Christian salutations of King Louis he responds by a savage menace, that if one single Crusader lands, every single Christian subject of his in Tunis shall be momentarily massacred. But this menace has no effect on Saint Louis and his host. They land incontinent ; they encamp in the Isthmus of Carthage, and the French King's almoner takes possession of the country of Hannibal, saying these words : " I say to you the ban of our Lord and of Louis, King of France, his serjeant." This same country and spot has heard spoken Getulian, Syrian, Vandal, Greek, and Ara-



bic, and always expressing the same passions, couched in different tongues.

Saint Louis resolves to take Carthage before besieging Tunis; for Tunis is rich and strongly fortified. He drives the Saracens from a tower which defends the cisterns of Carthage; he raises the new castle; in fancied security the stores of the expedition are disembarked, ultimately also the noble dames; and, by one of the revolutions that centuries bring round, the great ladies of France establish themselves among the ruins of the palace of Dido.

But fortune is fleeting, and fate is remorseless, and prosperity evanescent. Carthage is taken; but Tunis yet remains to be subdued, and Tunis cannot be taken without succours being received from Louis's brother the King of Sicily. Sweltering, perforce, on the sandy isthmus, the army is attacked by a contagious malady which, in a few days, diminishes its strength by one-half. The fierce African sun literally devours men accustomed to dwell beneath a mild and equably temperate sky. In order to augment the misery of the crusaders, the Moors fill the air, by means of machines, with burning sand; in their infernal ingenuity they imitate the effect of the famous khamsin or wind of the desert—an ingenuity worthy of the awful solitudes in which it has been engendered, showing to what pitch men can carry the genius of destruction. Continual combats and skirmishes weaken

the forces of the army ; the living no longer suffice to bury the dead ; the corpses are thrown into the ditches that form the entrenchments of the camp : these soon overflow with the stream of death.

Already the Counts of Nemours, Montmorency, and Vendôme, are dead ; the king has seen expire in his arms his best beloved son the Count of Nevers. Then the arrow strikes him ; and from that moment he knows that its wound is mortal, that the blow is sufficient to prostrate a frame already half-worn out by fatigue, mental and physical. Yet sincere in all other things—loving the truth above all—Saint Louis dissimulates now. He hides his illness from his courtiers and his people ; he feigns vigour and cheerfulness while the hand of Death is weighing him down. Still struggling, and fighting Death with bold front and resolute mien, he goes daily and nightly the round of the hospitals. From holy works he passes to royal duties. The safety of the camp has to be looked after ; an intrepid front has to be made to the Paynims ; justice has to be rendered to the King's lieges, beneath the shadow of the King's tent-curtains, as in the old days beneath the oaks of Vincennes.

For days Prince Philip, the eldest born and heir of Louis, has not quitted his royal father. He is at last obliged to keep his tent ; then, thinking that the hours of his utility to his people are numbered, but that it behoves him to provide for their

wellbeing even after his death, he writes his will. Ducange, the antiquary, has seen the manuscript in the saintly king's own writing. The characters are large, yet feebly traced; they are the weak expressions of a strong soul, for the will is full of wisdom, and goodness, and simple-mindedness, and sage advice to his son Philip, for the well governing of the kingdom and people that are soon to be his.

On the Monday morning, the twenty-fifth of August, Saint Louis of France, being in extremities, demands and receives extreme unction; then he causes himself to be stretched on a bed of cinders, and—crossing his arms over his breast, and raising his eyes to Heaven—waits for death.

The sight has been seen but once, and never will be seen again. The horizon becomes dotted with black specks—these specks are ships—these ships are the fleet of Charles of Anjou, King of Sicily, laden with arms and men and munitions of war for the Crusaders. The hills and plains around Tunis are swarming with the Moorish hosts; but in the camp of the Crusaders there is a dead silence; the only figures to be seen are wasted, emaciated, death-stricken soldiers slowly and painfully dragging themselves to the tent of their expiring king. Within that tent, towards the third hour of the afternoon, Saint Louis giving one sigh says, clearly and distinctly, these words, "Lord, I shall go into thine house and enter into thy temple!" and dies.

So ran my reverie of the last Crusader. He was a Christian and a King, worthy of better times and better deeds. Long the old knights and gentlemen who followed him were proud to say that they had been crusading with SAINT Louis; "and I have had made," writes the honest Sire de Joinville, "an altar in honour of God and of 'Monseigneur Saint Loys.' "

THE END.



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